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ABSTRACT

This sourcebook contains a series of lesson plans for remediating pragmatic problems for students in preschool through grade six. Introductory material describes the concept and development of pragmatics (the ability to use language as a tool), provides an observation checklist for clinicians to use in identifying specific types of pragmatic errors, defines pragmatic therapy, and offers general guidelines for its use. Lesson plans are organized according to six areas of pragmatics: topicalization, conversation, use of register, use of syntactic forms to convey pragmatic information, effective language, and nonverbal communication. Plans for each area are prefaced by a definition and discussion, guidelines for therapy, behavioral characteristics, and a goal model showing how the stated goals of a lesson are embedded in the lesson activities. Each of the 6 areas contains 15 lesson plans, 5 at the preschool level, 5 at the primary level (K-3), and 5 at the intermediate level (4-6). (JW)

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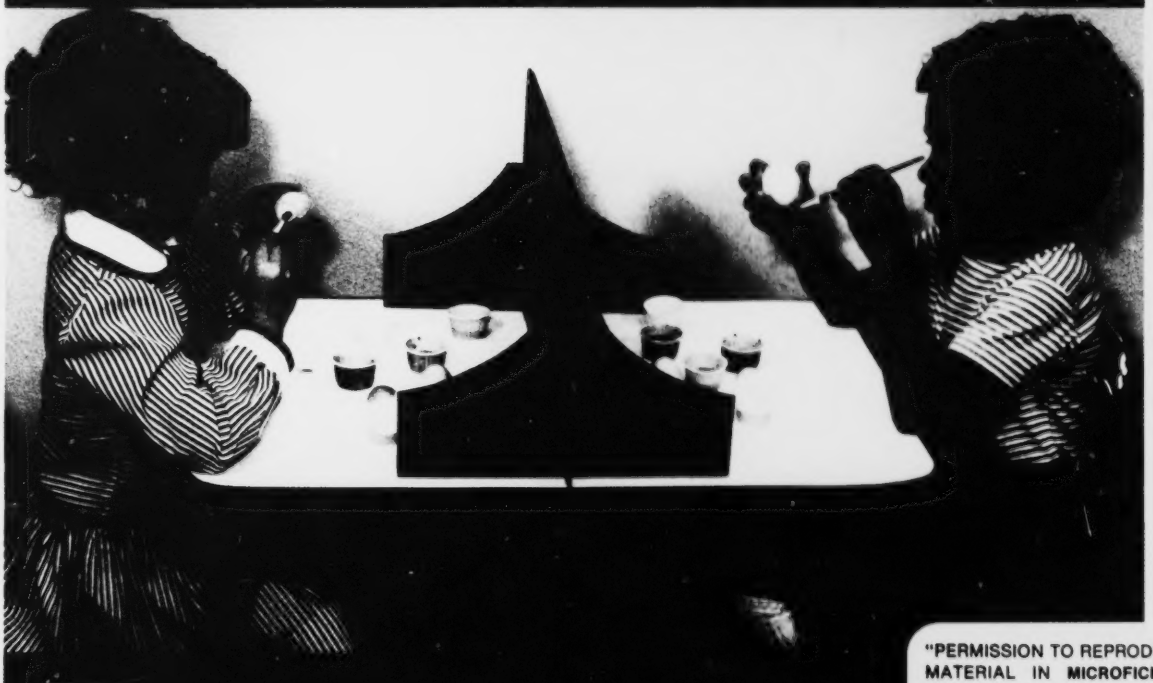
A Sourcebook of Pragmatic Activities

By
Elizabeth Booth Johnston, Ed.D.
Barbara Derickson Weinrich, M.A.
Ann Randolph Johnson, M.S.

Illustrations by John Furman



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Preface

Pragmatic therapy weaves the child's uses of purposeful communication into the fabric of everyday life. With it, language becomes a useful tool.

To help children use the language they possess, pragmatic therapy must provide practice in realistic language settings. Although original and innovative activities are highly motivational, originality in pragmatic therapy is less important than appropriateness. Children profit more from occasionally repeating a particularly relevant session than from always trying something new. Effective pragmatic therapy is a blend of traditional and innovative methods. Regardless of the adaptations, the main goal of each lesson is to elicit pragmatically appropriate spontaneous language in context.

The lesson plans in this sourcebook have been compiled to remediate the full range of pragmatic disorders, focusing at the levels of preschool, primary, and intermediate grades. Most of the materials have been generated by the authors. A number of the activities are adaptations of practices common to speech-language pathologists and teachers. All the lesson plans have been used in actual therapy.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of speech-language pathologists and teachers who are constantly adapting traditional materials and experimenting with new ones. We hope that this sourcebook provides the link between old and new that encourages creative teaching and therapy.

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What Is Pragmatics?

Language is our most powerful and flexible means of communication. Effective communicators can make language do what they want. The ability to produce sentences is useless unless the sentences are used appropriately. Pragmatically poor or inappropriate language may actually cause communication to fail. For example, the sentence "I don't like that" represents correctly structured language, but if used in the wrong context or at the wrong time, the sentence may not be perceived as it was intended and can destroy the situation.

The most recent and most abstract communication area to demand the attention of teachers and speech-language pathologists is that of pragmatics. This area is defined by Bates (1976b, p. 420) as "rules governing the use of language in context" and by Morris (1946) as the relationship existing between signs and their human users. The area actually occupies a focus outside the prescribed limits of language production, but it governs the effectiveness and appropriateness of everything that is provided within it. This *pragmatic ability*, the ability to use language as a tool, is as important as the language itself. Failure in this area is fully as damaging as failure to generate speech or language.

The study of pragmatics was originally derived from the semiotic theories of Peirce (1932). These theories later generated the notions of *kinesics*, communication as it exists in body movement and body language, and *proxemics*, our use of personal space as a communicative parameter (Hopper and Naremore 1978). While these factors continue to be part of general pragmatic considerations, the major advances appear to have been in terms of language usage (using language as a tool or making the language do what one wants it to do). This is the sense in which speech-language pathologists and teachers are most likely to deal with pragmatics, and it is this aspect which is the focus of *A Sourcebook of Pragmatic Activities*.

Professionals define pragmatics as an essential subclassification of communication. A great deal of emphasis is currently placed upon this area. The very nature of the pragmatic appropriateness of developing language makes it difficult to define or set limits. *Appropriate pragmatics* means different things to different people. Research and observation (Searle 1965; Bloom 1970; Bloom and Lahey 1978; Johnson, Johnston, and Weinrich 1984; Bates 1976a; Bates and Johnston 1979; Grice 1975) provide an outline that deals with all speech and language aspects of an individual's life span. This sourcebook focuses on pragmatic abilities that must be developed by children to achieve success in school and on the identification and remediation of pragmatic problems.

At this time, only incomplete practical information exists about developmental levels or order of emergence of pragmatic abilities. Nonetheless, certain pragmatic abilities are essential to the normal development of communication and can be expected to emerge very early.

In practical terms the speech-language pathologist or teacher is faced with the following:

1. Certain pragmatic abilities can be expected within normal communication development.
2. Like speech and language development, pragmatic development is hierarchical in nature.
3. Children who lack essential pragmatic abilities are likely to fail at some communication tasks since they are unable to make their language work for them.
4. These patterns of pragmatic failure may have extreme consequences, possibly resulting in faulty diagnosis of more serious disorders such as mental retardation, emotional disturbances, etc.

5. It becomes the responsibility of speech-language pathologists and teachers to identify and remediate individuals with disordered pragmatics.
6. This remediation can often be done in group settings. Currrently, pragmatic intervention is most often done without access to firm normative data about either order of time or emergence and without comparative studies of methods.

While information exists that can address these concerns, the establishment of firm data awaits ongoing and future research.

Communication Development

Studies of children's development appear to establish prerequisites of cognition, language, and pragmatic appropriateness for effective communication development. These cornerstones are the basis for the intervention.

COGNITION

The basic prerequisite for language is cognition. As the child comes to know about the world, motivation to communicate with others occurs. In fact, it is difficult to envision any verbalizations not based on cognition as meeting any communicative purpose. For an utterance to satisfy the requirements of communication, it must reflect some bit of cognitive information on the part of the speaker. Otherwise, it communicates nothing. This being the case, the development of cognitive operations (Inhelder and Chipman 1976) will become a major requisite for the establishment of communication.

Bloom (1970) has identified three cognitive prerequisites for emerging language. These develop during the sensorimotor period described by Piaget (Wadsworth 1975) while the child is gaining the organization basis for language. According to Bloom (1970), the child must have

1. **Nonlinguistic Experience.** The child must have had experiences in the world to have something to talk about. If the child has never been anywhere or done anything there will be nothing to tell another person. Anne, age 28 months, is always left home while her mother goes about her errands. Anne does not have new events or occurrences to tell about. On the other hand, Lisa is routinely put into her car seat, taken to the store, the library, and the park. Her world is full of things and places to talk about. It is no wonder she continually tries to tell others what she has seen or where she has gone.
2. **Linguistic Experience.** The child must have heard language to know that it exists and to attempt to produce it. Lack of language stimulation can severely delay language development. Patty's mother frequently talks about what she is doing, what others are doing, or what is happening. She speaks slowly, simply, and with plenty of repetition, giving Patty the opportunity to organize language and to try it herself. Mike does not hear very well. He is aware only of what is spoken loudly and emphatically. He does not have the benefit of his mother's simple organized language to help him learn, and he is not eager to communicate by using language.
3. **Perceptual Cognitive Knowledge.** This relates to the Piagetian notion of sensorimotor knowledge: The development of *object constancy.* The knowledge that objects have physical permanence is expressed in the child's language by the noun category. Without it, the child would lack nouns (subjects and objects) and would probably be delayed in developing understanding of how to relate to people and things in the world. *Coordinated space,* understanding how one relates to people and things, is expressed by prepositions. The child must be able to use *in, on, under,* etc., to respond to the large number of WH questions and adverbial notions in the communicative world. *Causality,* an understanding of cause and effect, can be identified in children's use of causal words and the subordination of various sentence elements. Through this under-

standing they also learn that they can be the agent (doer of the action) and that they can cause things to happen. *Temporality*, an understanding of ongoing time, is expressed by verb tenses, which are crucial to success in the language arts. This sensorimotor knowledge has important consequences in the development of language. During this time the child learns how to relate to objects and other persons in time and space.

LANGUAGE

Once essential cognitive prerequisites have been satisfied, the child will begin to develop the symbolic system most commonly reflected in language. Regardless of the language being learned, four universal areas will be established and can, when necessary, be used as organizers for planned intervention:

1. **Pragmatics.** The ability to use language as a tool to do what one wants it to do is an important aspect of every language. All notions of making language appropriate are essentially related to pragmatics.
2. **Semantics.** This term refers to the ability to choose words in relationship with each other. All aspects of transmission of meaning are related to semantics.
3. **Syntax.** The use of words in acceptable grammatical relationships are the elements of language structure. Children who have internalized the grammar of their language family are able to be more specific in both pragmatic and semantic information.
4. **Phonology.** An organized system of sounds is provided for use in spoken language. Children formulate rules that govern the use of the sound system and the development of the needed phonetic inventory. This ability also helps further specify fine points of pragmatics, semantics, and syntactic usage.

Each of these universal areas of communication has an important role to play and each may require remediation for some children.

PRAGMATIC APPROPRIATENESS

Pragmatics is the most recently identified of these universal areas and presents the least research, norms, and development. Elizabeth Bates (1976a, p. 6) identifies a "whole new array of special pragmatic-semantic *trees*."

1. **Performatives.** The speaker must be aware of the intent to use a sentence as a question, a command, etc. For example, the child must have a negative performative to produce "No spank me" or a declarative performative to produce "I see Mommy."
2. **Presuppositions.** Assumptions about the context are necessary to make a sentence verifiable, or appropriate, or both. For example, when Tommy is talking to Mary, his assumptions about what she thinks or feels will determine what he chooses to say to her.
3. **Conversational Postulates.** Particular presuppositions about the general nature of human dialogue and its conventional use are politeness conventions used by all who speak a given language. For example, John, at the Spring Banquet, asks Fred, "Can you reach the salt?" Fred's response is to hand John the salt because he realizes the question was actually a polite request for action.

Thus we see that the performative aspect of pragmatics enables the speaker to establish modality (produce the several types of sentences, such as interrogatives, declaratives, etc.), which a sentence needs to exist. The presuppositional aspect explains the relationship between what the speaker believes to be true of the context and the manner of response to the context, while conversational postulates deal with the politeness conventions used by a language group. All are essential to communication, and their developmental hierarchy can be observed during the early preschool years.

Pragmatic ability begins early in the child's life as the infant learns about eye contact and conversational turn-taking. It continues to develop in the child and the adult as language becomes a useful tool.

Pragmatic Areas

A Sourcebook of Pragmatic Activities deals with intervention that addresses six specific areas of pragmatics:

1. **Topicalization.** Introducing or terminating a topic as well as maintaining the topic are vital to conversation.
2. **Conversational Ability.** Both speaking and listening skills, such as turn-taking and changing the topic appropriately, are important to communication.
3. **Use of Register.** The manner in which one individual speaks to another, such as formal or informal address and tone of voice, can have a major influence on the communication.
4. **Use of Syntactic Forms to Convey Pragmatic Information.** Communication must employ grammatic tools that are suitable to the conversation and that are indicated by the presuppositions of the speaker.
5. **Effective Language.** The message should convey what the speaker meant it to. Was the intention to tell a joke, to request information, or to politely disagree?
6. **Nonverbal Communication.** To be appropriate, facial expressions and gestures must match the spoken communication.

Each of these areas is described fully in the sections dealing with specific pragmatic goals and related intervention activities.

Importance of Pragmatics

When pragmatic development has not been adequate, the child can be expected to encounter basic communication problems. Communication is likely to be inappropriate, causing a variety of breakdowns in operation. In addition to communication disturbances and the child's frustration, this problem may contribute to delay and deviancy that are produced both in language and in cognitive development. This may ultimately confound the testing and result in faulty diagnosis. The diagnosis may wrongly indicate that the child has more pervasive problems than is actual. For example, mental or emotional problems may be recorded instead of the language-based inability to make language do what the child wants it to do.

Depending on the severity of the phonological problems, the child may range from fully intelligible to unintelligible. In some severe cases, the primary focus must be on remediating this area before the child's use of language can be interpreted. However, when speech can be understood, phonetic errors detract little from meaningful communication and remediation can be deferred until later in the child's development.

The child who has failed to develop acceptable syntax can probably still communicate. Syntax remediation can be deferred until the more essential elements have been targeted.

Failure to develop use of the desired semantic relationships indicates the child will have problems communicating meaning to others. This aspect must constitute one of the early targets for remediation.

Children who have not developed appropriate pragmatics may be the most frustrated of all. Not only are they unable to make communications do what they want them to do, but their motives and meanings are frequently misunderstood. Lacking proper pragmatics, these children are probably unable to make any other area of the communication system work for them. This often leads to discouragement and a sense of failure: Children who will no longer even try. In addition to communicative failure, these children have an inadequate base to begin school. Their expectations, understanding, and sense of the school process do not make learning a natural progression and their sense of failure deepens. Pragmatic intervention is therefore the most urgent primary need for a child who has problems in this area.

Identifying Pragmatic Problems

Diagnosis of pragmatic problems is an inexact process because of the lack of established norms and developmental data and the subjective nature of response evaluation. While no published, standardized test for pragmatic ability is yet available, the *Communication Abilities Test* (Johnston 1980) is currently being standardized. This test evaluates the majority of pragmatic abilities that are the focus of this sourcebook.

At our present level of sophistication, determination of children's pragmatic adequacy is best done by observing them in a variety of contexts and determining their level of pragmatic-communicative capability. Pragmatic Observations, pages 6-7, lists the various pragmatic expectations or problems. The speech-language pathologist or teacher may observe the children and rate them either *adequate* or *inadequate* on each item from the list.

Pragmatic Observations

Sentence Modalities

Can the child

1. produce imperative modality?
2. produce declarative modality?
3. produce negative modality?
4. ask yes/no questions?
5. ask WH questions?

Appropriateness Postulates

6. Is the child's language relevant to the situation and context?
7. Is the child's language appropriate to the situation and people present?
8. Does the child provide sufficient (but not too much) information?
9. Is the child's language sufficiently polite?
10. Does the child's language have sufficient *truth value?*

Discourse and Conversation

Does the child

11. establish eye contact?
12. initiate conversation?
13. respond to conversation?
14. take conversational turns?
15. establish a topic?
16. maintain conversation appropriately?
17. terminate conversation appropriately?
18. change topics appropriately?
19. honor the *given/new contract?*
20. use syntactic structures (determiners, pronouns, relative clauses, and adjectives) to provide pragmatic information?

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What Can the Child Do with Language?

Can the child

21. ask for help?
22. label objects?
23. give names to people and animals?
24. offer help?
25. greet people?
26. verbalize a problem?
27. disagree with another?
28. predict outcome?
29. give directions?
30. tell others they have made an error?
31. suggest action?
32. make choices?
33. speculate?
34. tell jokes and play with language?
35. "talk about talking" (metalinguistics)?
36. open and close phone conversations?
37. tell stories?
38. take linguistic directions?
39. express needs and feelings?
40. console?
41. deceive?
42. pretend?
43. use literary forms?
44. use the school register?
45. use pragmatics in reading?

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Pragmatic Therapy

The notion of intervention to remediate pragmatic disabilities is compatible with the developmental views of Chomsky (1965), Brown (1973), Bloom (1970, 1973), Lenneberg (1967), Bloom and Lahey (1978), and Kretschmer and Kretschmer (1978), and the linguistic-pragmatic views of Searle (1965), Grice (1975), Bates (1976a), Bates and Johnston (1979), and Halliday (1975). While the focus of most of the theorists listed here is not remediation, the notion of intervention does provide the mechanism for improving the child's pragmatic prowess and can be incorporated into the developmental view. It also follows the cognitive-developmental constructionist approach of Piaget (Inhelder and Chipman 1976). Generally, the intervention approach makes basic assumptions, provides a cohesive philosophy that explains the language emergence, and guides the course of therapy.

Language is assumed to be innate in humans and under normal circumstances it will develop the universal aspects identified earlier (Chomsky 1965; Lenneberg 1967). Language, for all those who possess it, will perform the same communicative functions and contain the same universal areas.

Children who are developing normally are believed to construct their language upon a cognitive base, using at least two basic techniques.

1. **A combination of rule induction and hypothesis testing.** Children listen to the language of their families until they can abstract a rule. When they sense that they have a rule for using language, they try it out. If the feedback they receive is positive (the language does what they want it to), they maintain that bit of language in their repertoire and use it again and again. If the feedback they receive is negative (the language does not operate as they hoped), they will abandon the rule and try again to abstract a correct one. For example, in testing an abstracted rule, a child may say, "Greg need cookie." If either the cookie or an acknowledgment of his request is forthcoming, the rule will be confirmed. If nothing appropriate happens, Greg will conclude that he abstracted an incorrect rule and will abandon it.

2. **The use of *Motherese.*** *Motherese* represents the customary way the mother or major caregiver talks to the child (Snow 1972) and grows more complex as the child learns. It initially uses simple pragmatic interactions, semantic relationships and vocabulary, uncomplicated grammar, and ordinary inflectional patterns. Children are introduced early to pragmatics through these interactions with their mothers. For example, the mother looks into her infant's eyes and verbalizes, then pauses to listen as the baby vocalizes. Thus the infant learns eye contact and verbal turn-taking from the various repetitions of this pleasurable interaction with Mother.

When children have the necessary prerequisites to learn language, have the language presented in the simple organized patterns of motherese, and can use the strategies of rule induction and hypothesis testing, they are ready and able to construct a communication system on their existing cognitive base.

In experience-based language therapy the child takes part in actual activities while the speech-language pathologist or teacher models the language appropriate to the activity and stimulates the child to produce it. This method is both compatible with developmental philosophy and highly effective. In addition, it generalizes well to structures other than those that were specifically targeted. The child who abstracts the rules to operate one linguistic construction will be able to generalize and use the language in other related productions.

Since this type of therapy is well suited to group work, the expansion of this general philosophy to pragmatic therapy allows the speech-language pathologist or teacher to work with several children together. The professional must identify the child's areas of pragmatic weakness and design interactions (either group or individual) that will provide each child with opportunities to experience success in the desired activities. The behavior is modeled by the speech-language pathologist or teacher and the other children. All children are given appropriate feedback. In this way they can learn how to interact (from the modeling) and know when they have succeeded (from the feedback).

Activity seems to be a necessary element in the construction of a communication system. Consequently, experience is the raw material from which it is constructed. When a child needs help with pragmatic development, therapy focused on the experience model must be based on real situations and group interactions that provide a needed *experience in appropriateness.* Pragmatic experiences must be common occurrences that can be modeled and that will be useful in daily life. They should be experiences from which the child can generalize to a variety of other experiences. It is crucial that behavior elicited from each child be related to reality and be pragmatically appropriate within the context. The child must never be expected to do anything that violates accepted appropriateness conventions or the entire point of the lesson may be distorted. If the feedback given by speech-language pathologists and teachers is to have the necessary impact, it must be both immediate and accurate.

The Lesson Plans

A Sourcebook of Pragmatic Activities is intended to be used by speech-language pathologists working with children in pragmatic therapy. It can also be easily used by preschool, primary, and intermediate teachers as well as by teachers in a variety of special settings. The materials do not focus on the early pragmatic lessons that are often emphasized in intervention with the severely/profoundly retarded, but many of the lessons could be adapted or expanded to meet these more specialized needs.

The lesson plans are arranged by six general pragmatic goals: topicalization, conversational ability, register, use of syntactic forms to designate pragmatic information, effective language, and nonverbal communication. Each general goal is divided into three age ranges: preschool, primary (K-3), and intermediate (4-6). Each goal is defined and behavioral characteristics are provided.

The materials are not difficult to use. However, two basic guidelines should be applied: First, children with problems in pragmatics must be identified by observation and comparison with normal expectations. Use Pragmatic Observations, pages 6-7, as a checklist. Second, the lesson must be constructed to fit the individual. Choose and implement appropriate pragmatic goals beginning with the lesson plans. Care must be taken to provide appropriate individual stimulation and feedback so each child will learn the desired interactions. Use the Pragmatic Observation sheets throughout therapy to observe progress and choose new goals.

Due to the nature of pragmatic activities and the broad goals of the therapy, *much overlap between goals can be expected.* Activities that are primarily identified as contributing to one goal may be very effective in furthering several other goals. In fact, depending on the emphasis and skill of the instructor, most of these plans can be used as a base for all targets or levels.

The lessons are ordinary enough to have high generative potential and their structure is loose enough to allow each professional to modify or act on them according to need. Unlimited modification should be made to achieve more specific results or to relate to more specific needs. The lesson plans were intended to be modified for specific needs and to inspire additional ideas and plans that will lead to pragmatic goals.

General Guidelines

Pragmatics mark speakers as appropriate communicators or as communicators with problems. The main goal of each communicative exchange is to make the language do what we want it to do. Most adult speakers have learned to perform effectively in what they choose to communicate and in ways appropriate to specific people and places. They have abstracted this information from interactions with others in the environment by interpreting the environmental feedback received and by modifying their behavior in response.

Normally developing children can be expected to abstract their pragmatic rules from interaction with the world. For children who have pragmatic problems, this has not been the case. Environmental feedback was obviously not enough. Something more specific is required. The speech-language pathologist must determine how much structure each child requires and then provide that amount. The guidelines for each section of this sourcebook can be used in a directive manner or can be modified to be compatible with a nondirective developmental approach.

The effective speech-language pathologist will

1. Identify specific goals children need to work on
2. Plan experiences and interactions that will highlight these goals
3. Provide as direct and structured modeling and expansion as necessary to ensure the integrity of the sessions
4. Provide the necessary feedback and encouragement to let children know when they have it right and to instill a desire to continue producing correct forms

Children must be encouraged to experience successful communications and to examine and understand how the variety of examples of failed communications come about. The child's entire range of metapragmatic abilities comes into play at this level. The suggested activities can all be approached in this manner. The speech-language pathologist or teacher must be objective and allow the child freedom to speculate and choose. This takes advantage of the numerous role-play activities in this sourcebook and helps children become more astute observers and interpreters of the feedback they receive from their listeners.

In this essentially trial-and-error pattern of learning, it is important that children receive feedback that is immediate (to let them know when they have it right and when they do not), discriminative (to let them know exactly which parts of their behavior are being confirmed), and appropriate (to give them the messages they need for completing their own pragmatic repertoire).

Children are often confused because, even when they have generated the desired response, the feedback is ambivalent. While they may feel that they are right, the feedback they require to be sure has been ambiguous. It is incumbent on all clinicians who practice pragmatic therapy to concentrate on the prompt, skillful administration of appropriate feedback. Only in this way can children learn how to operate effectively in the six ranges of pragmatic activity outlined here. When they have done this in carefully chosen practice experiences, children will be more able to generalize and to transfer their learning to a wider variety of communicative situations.

Topicalization

Topicalization

Definition and Discussion

A significant amount of the information we receive and express depends on verbalized language. This verbalization in turn depends to a large degree on our ability to topicalize. *Receptively* we must be able to identify the topics of others and to follow them during conversational exchange. *Expressively* we must be able to establish specific topics that others can recognize and to use them appropriately. We must be able to cooperate in maintaining a topic through the conversational exchange. When this ability is fully developed, individuals will be able to

1. Establish the specific topic of their choice
2. Maintain it for an appropriate length of time, depending on age
3. Know acceptable ways of modifying or changing the topic

These three skills are obviously crucial to the smooth operation of conversation. They are developmental in nature and have their roots in the early pragmatic development of each child. *Failures in this area will translate to both interpersonal and school problems* (Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978).

The ability to establish topic appears to be related, at least in part, to the child's understanding of object constancy. Knowledge of an object's properties forms a base upon which children can learn how to establish early topics for conversation. In part this is done during the early interactions between mother and child as they establish joint reference (both look at and refer to the same objects) and learn to verbalize in reference to them.

As children grow older, they go through a period of *chaining* the word to the concept or object (Bloom 1970). One-word naming enables them to produce single words that communicate. Ultimately, the child at the one-word level will be able to focus on the topic (often present in the context) and to use the single word to furnish the comment, yielding a communicative utterance. For example, if Tommy holds a broken toy (the topic or subject) in his hand and utters the single word "broke" (the comment or predicate), he has produced a verbal communication.

Knowing how to use this newfound ability appropriately is important pragmatically. The sequence of the later development of topicalization parallels the overall development of conversation (Bates 1976b; Bloom and Lahey 1978). Children first learn to greet ("Hi Mommy") followed by the farewell ("Bye Mommy"). As they begin to understand dialogue format, they will insert utterances, organized around a topic, between the greeting and the farewell. Communication without appropriate use of topicalization falls short of its intended goals. It lacks organization, or the focus to form it into conversation. From earliest one-word-and-gesture or topic-and-comment utterances, children progress through the necessary learning that will enable them to establish a topic.

Establishment of a topic comes from the individual's desire to communicate on a specific subject and the presupposition that another party is interested in this topic. Establishment of a conversational topic is a joint activity subtly engaged in by the prospective participants. The topic must be proposed by one individual but must also be accepted by the other individual or by others in the group. The following dialogue provides an example:

Melissa: Have you read any good books lately?

Caroline: Not really. (No topic)

Melissa: Do you go to the movies often?

Caroline: No, I don't care for the movies. (No topic)
I do go to an exercise class every day.

Melissa: Oh! How interesting. I go to an exercise class too. (Topic established)

Once the topic is established, all the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic rules for maintaining it become important.

Children who have topicalization problems are notable because their listeners are often confused about what the topic is. It is difficult for these children to let their listeners know what the topic is and to stay on that topic long enough to communicate specific items. They are often unable to change the topic effectively or to refrain from changing it accidentally.

The salient features of intervention for topicalization problems appear to be

1. Placing the child in a position to practice the chosen topicalization skills
2. Providing appropriate feedback to let the child know how well the goal is being met

These features are found in all the lesson plans designed to remediate this area. Using them as a model, other plans can easily be constructed for children with particular problems.

Guidelines for Therapy

Pragmatic therapy may be most effectively done in a group with the speech-language pathologist acting as a guide, moderating the children's behavior at levels that are appropriate to them. Children must be led to topicalize and be encouraged to comment.

If the children are preschoolers, this may involve giving them objects, supplying words, and providing appropriate comments. For example, Sara, age three, is looking wistfully at cookies on a plate. The clinician takes her hand, places a cookie in it, and models, "Cookie. I want a cookie. The cookie is good." If Sara produces a desirable utterance in any form, the clinician responds with immediate and enthusiastic feedback, "Good for you. Here is a cookie for you."

In dealing with primary and intermediate children, encourage desired utterances by such exchanges as, "What shall we talk about? We could talk about this science experiment. What can we say about this project?" When the child responds to such prompts, provide enthusiastic and immediate feedback. Staying on the topic may be enhanced by direct responses such as, "We are talking about pets now. What can we say about our pets?" When children often stray off the topic, remember what topics they seemed to have wanted to talk about and return to them at an appropriate time.

The children will initially have more success with activities involving concrete objects. This could be followed by activities using pictures. Finally, introduce topics that are self-generated and are not represented by concrete stimuli.

Signaling a change of topic must be taught specifically as linguistic signals. For primary and intermediate children, concentrate on showing them that they must stay on the topic unless the others are notified. For example, "Penny, remember we are talking about winter. If you want to talk about something else now, you need to let me know the subject is changing. You can change the subject by finishing the old subject and starting at the beginning of the new one. Let's practice that." Follow this by direct step-by-step modeling of the topic change with continuing feedback.

Signals for change of topic can be either inflectional or verbal. For example, "John, you can change the subject by changing the pitch of your voice or by using the connecting words we just talked about." This skill is best taught by modeling and direct feedback. Young children may internalize this only if they hear many examples of appropriately terminated

topics. With school-age children, provide specific directions such as, "When you are finished talking about a particular thing, let your voice go down and give a little pause, so everyone will know you are finished. Then begin your new topic." This, along with specific practice, provides sufficient guidance for some primary and most intermediate children.

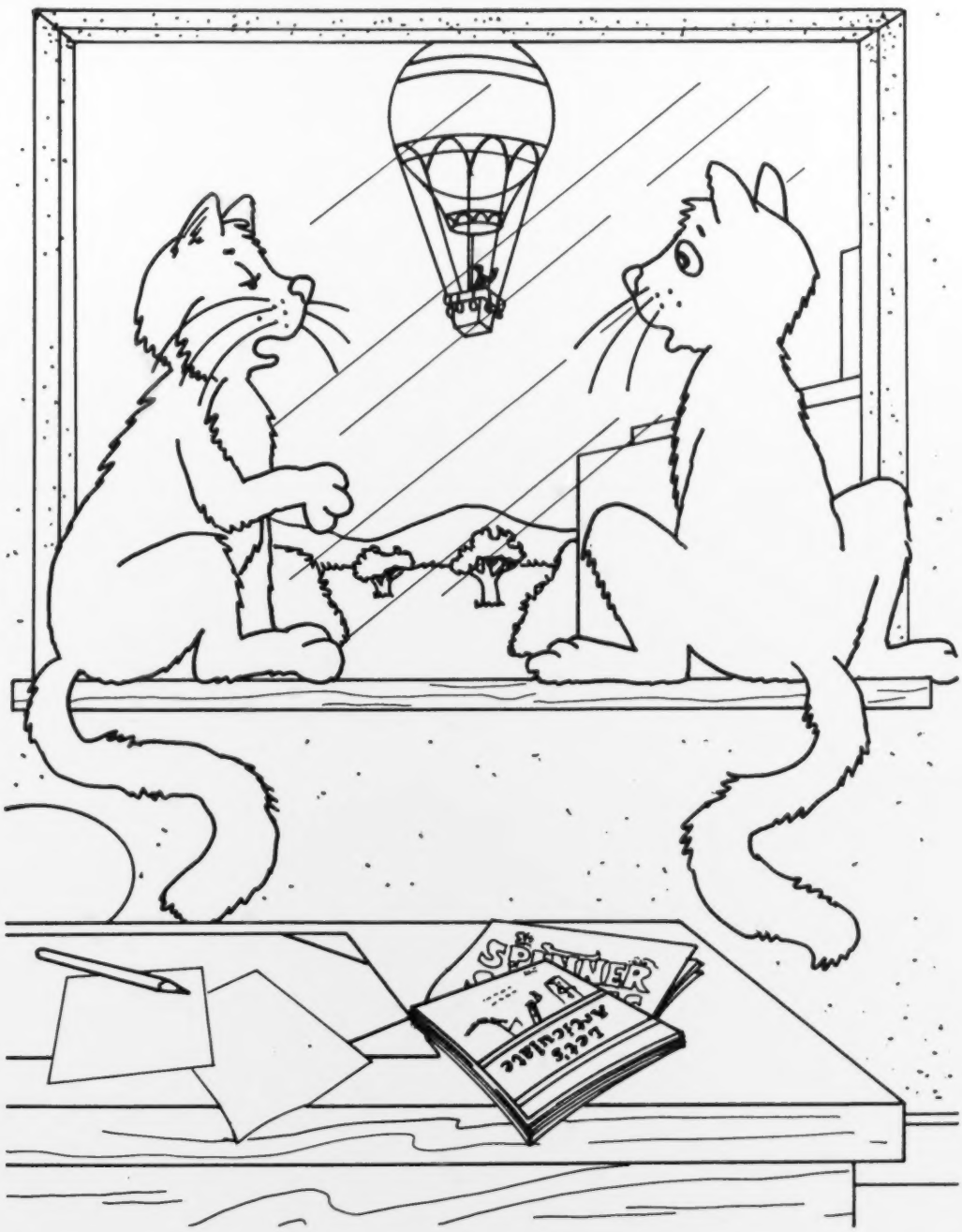
The lesson plans in this section rely for their effectiveness on specific clinician behaviors such as the ones just discussed. Children's experiences and the language they are encouraged to produce must reflect true and appropriate utterances. Feedback to them must identify what they did right. Modeling and direct environmental feedback received by the children enable them to

1. Identify their correct behavior
2. Practice what they are unsure of
3. Internalize the behaviors that received the feedback

Behavioral Characteristics for Topicalization

The student

1. Establishes a topic and makes comments
2. Stays on the topic for an appropriate number of utterances
3. Signals a change of topic
4. Terminates a topic appropriately



Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Topicalization

Preschool
- Puppets
- Picture Stories
- Cleaning the Speech Room
- Categorizing Zoo and Farm Animals
- Beginning, Middle, and End

Primary (K-3)
- Viewing through a Stereoscope
- Describing Objects
- Identifying Foods by Taste
- Decorating a Dollhouse
- Matching Seasons and Objects

Intermediate (4-6)
- The Magic Circle
- Knotted Yarn Tales
- Drawing Floor Plans
- What's My Line?
- Cause and Effect

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Topicalization

Activity: Puppets

Materials: Favorite puppet characters

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances

Instructions: The student selects a puppet and role-plays with the character using various settings. Let the student choose a setting with your guidance. Once the situation has been established, encourage the student to stay on the topic by staying in character and by following the established guidelines.

Example

Miss Pig is getting ready to meet her favorite rock singer. She is trying to look her best.

Instructor: What is Miss Pig doing to get ready?

Jody: Combing her hair.

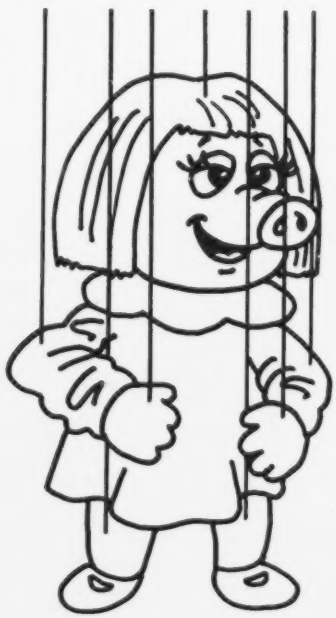
Instructor: What else?

Jody: I don't know.

Instructor: What does your mom do if she is getting ready to go out?

Jody: Oh, I know. Miss Pig is putting on lipstick and earrings.

Instructor: Good.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Topicalization

Activity: Picture Stories

Materials: Picture cards or pictures from magazines

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances

Instructions: Each student selects a picture and takes a turn being the storyteller and answering questions about the story. The object is for the student to relate a story that is appropriate to the picture while the other students practice asking questions about the topic.

Example

Sara: This is a story about a big animal.

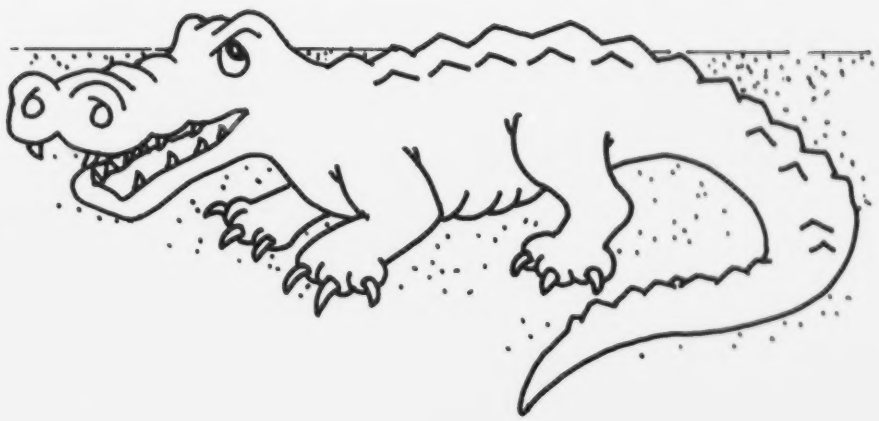
Jason: Is it an elephant?

Instructor: Let Sara give more information before you guess.

Sara: This animal is really old and has a very long tail.

Instructor: Can you tell us more? What is the animal's skin like?

Sara: Oh, yes. It's like a snake's skin.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Topicalization

Activity: Cleaning the Speech Room

Materials: Toys, bucket, water, cloths, spray glass-cleanser, mild dish detergent, paper towels

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Label areas for toy storage: A shelf for cars, a shelf for trucks, a box for blocks, a drawer for stuffed animals, etc. Each student selects an area and takes turns choosing toys that belong in that area. The student must name the toy, describe it, tell how to clean it, and why it belongs in a specific area. Then the student cleans the toy and puts it away. When another toy is selected, the student signals the topic change with a marker such as, "Now I am going to choose a different toy."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Topicalization

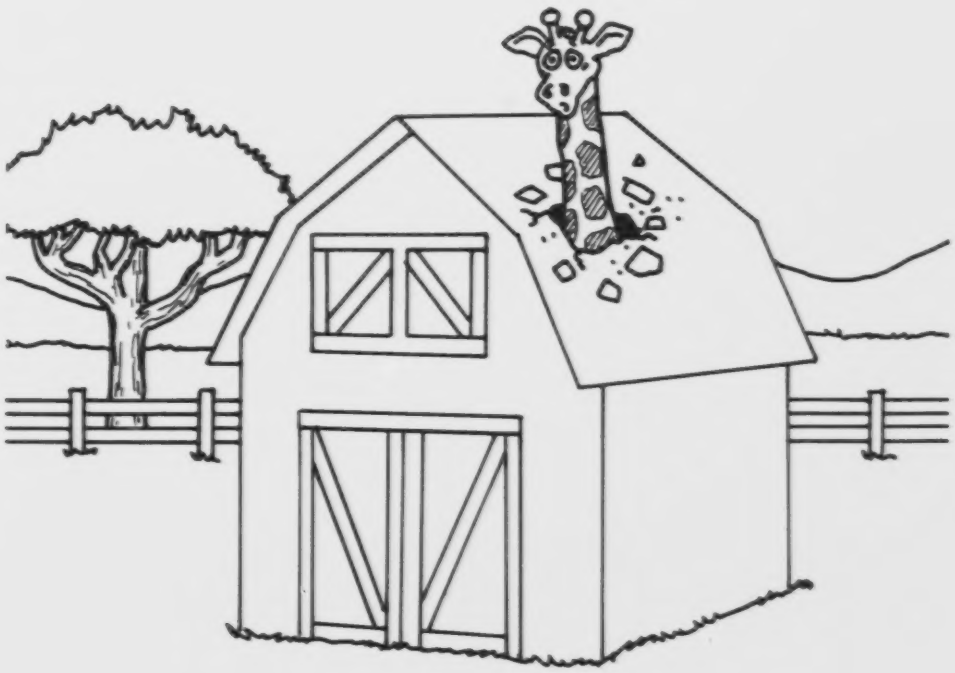
Activity: Categorizing Zoo and Farm Animals

Materials: Toy zoo animals—giraffe, lion, monkey, seal, elephant, tiger, zebra, bear
Toy farm animals—cow, horse, goat, chicken, pig, turkey, sheep, duck
Zoo cages and a barn

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Each student chooses either a zoo cage or a barn. Students take turns selecting an animal that belongs in the shelters they have chosen and make three comments about the animal. The first comment should include a label for the animal or indicate that it is a different animal. If the student chooses an inappropriate animal, ask the other students to indicate where it belongs.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Topicalization

Activity: Constructing a Story

Materials: Posters depicting simple actions

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic
4. Terminate a topic appropriately

Instructions: Each student chooses a poster. Students take turns telling stories about their posters while the other students ask questions about the story. In this way, students practice constructing a beginning, a middle, and an end to a story topic.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Topicalization

Activity: Viewing through a Stereoscope

Materials: Stereoscope with story cards

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Let a student examine the story cards and select a scene from one of the stories. The student describes that scene with as much detail as possible. The other students try to guess which story the scene is from.

Example

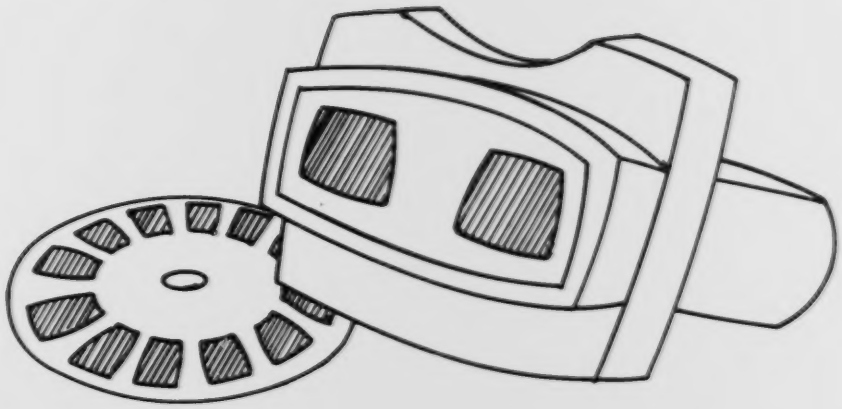
Carlos: In the first picture, there is a little girl walking through the woods. She comes to a house.

Steven: Tell us more!

Carlos: In the next picture, the little girl goes into the house and finds no one at home. There are three bowls on the table.

Steven: It's about Red Riding Hood.

Instructor: Are you sure? Let's listen to more of the story.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Topicalization

Activity: Describing Objects

Materials: Large bag containing several objects of different textures such as a spoon, washcloth, sandpaper, hairbrush, and cotton ball

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic
4. Terminate a topic appropriately

Instructions: The students take turns putting a hand inside the bag and feeling the objects. As a student describes one of the objects in detail (shape, texture, size, use), the other students try to identify the object.

Example

Mickey: It has a long handle. It is bigger at one end.

Instructor: How does it feel?

Mickey: The handle is hard. The big end feels soft.

Kathy: Is it a sponge? My mommy has six sponges.

Instructor: Let's describe the object some more.

Mickey: You use it for your hair.

Kathy: Is it a brush?

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Topicalization

Activity: Identifying Foods by Taste (Hanauer 1968)

Materials: Small peeled cubes of raw fruits and vegetables such as apple, carrot, onion, potato, celery, and turnip
Blindfold

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic
4. Terminate a topic appropriately

Instructions: Students take turns being blindfolded and pinching their noses shut with a thumb and forefinger. Place a food cube on the student's tongue. The student must describe the flavor (sweet, bitter, sour, etc.) and texture (crunchy, soft, etc.) of the food and guess what it is. If the student makes an irrelevant comment, interrupt with a reminder to comment only about the food.

Example

Debbie: It's juicy. It's crunchy.

Instructor: Can you tell me more? Is it sweet or sour?

Debbie: I don't like sour things. I got candy on my birthday.

Instructor: Today we're talking about the food we have here. Is the food in your mouth sweet or sour?

Debbie: It's sweet, And that's all. Is it apple?

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Topicalization

Activity: Decorating a Dollhouse

Materials: Dollhouse or cardboard box divided into rooms
Dollhouse furniture or pictures of furniture

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic
4. Terminate a topic appropriately

Instructions: Each student selects a room in the dollhouse, arranges the furniture to resemble a room at home, and then describes the room and its furniture arrangement. Students should announce that they are finished with their descriptions. For example, "And that's all about my bedroom." Or, "I'm finished telling about this room." The next student signals a change of topic by announcing the next room. For example, "This is the kitchen." Or, "I'm going to tell about our living room."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Topicalization

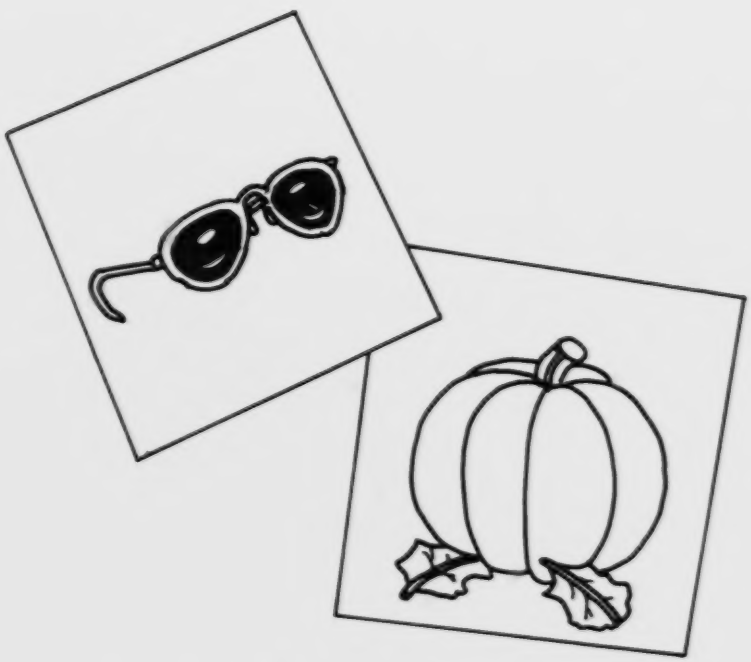
Activity: Matching Seasons and Objects

Materials: Four pictures depicting the seasons (fall, winter, spring, and summer)
Clothes, foods, and other objects or pictures of objects associated with specific seasons. For example, sunglasses (summer), warm gloves (winter), umbrella (spring), and a pumpkin (fall)

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Arrange the pictures of the four seasons and all the related objects and pictures in front of the students. One student chooses a season (the topic) and then selects all of the associated items that go with that season. Ask the student to explain why the seasons and selected objects match.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Topicalization

Activity: The Magic Circle

Materials: Pillows or carpet squares

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Decide on a topic for conversation in the Magic Circle. Explain the rules for participating in the Magic Circle:

1. You must remain on the topic.
2. You cannot interrupt.
3. Everyone gets a turn to talk.
4. Everyone must be polite.

Ask the students to sit on the pillows or carpet squares in a circle on the floor. Offer guidelines whenever necessary.

Example

Instructor: Today we have decided to talk about signs of spring. Who would like to start?

Jennifer: The flowers are starting to bloom.

Randy: I've seen a lot more birds.

Craig: Do you know what my daddy did last night?

Jennifer: Remember, you have to keep talking about signs of spring because we are in the Magic Circle.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Topicalization

Activity: Knotted Yarn Tales

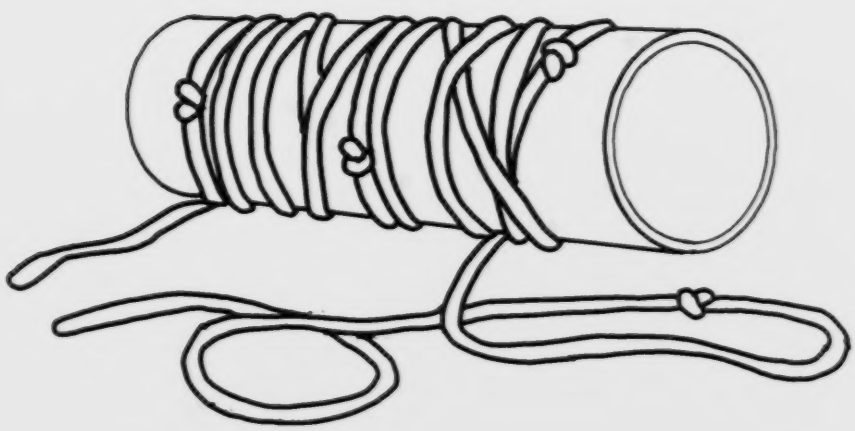
Materials: Ball of yarn with a knot tied at various space intervals, coffee can, empty paper-towel roll, and topic cards

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic
4. Terminate a topic appropriately

Instructions: Place the ball of yarn in the coffee can.

Designate a student to be the first speaker. The speaker draws a card that specifies a topic (for example, "Tell about a pet"). The speaker talks about this topic while rolling the yarn from the coffee can onto the empty paper-towel roll. The speaker must stay on the topic until a knot appears in the yarn. Then the speaker ends the topic appropriately and passes the coffee can and paper-towel roll to the next speaker. Each speaker draws a topic card and talks about the topic while continuing to roll the yarn onto the paper-towel roll. Assist the speakers by asking a question like, "What can you say when you are finished talking about your pet?"



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Topicalization

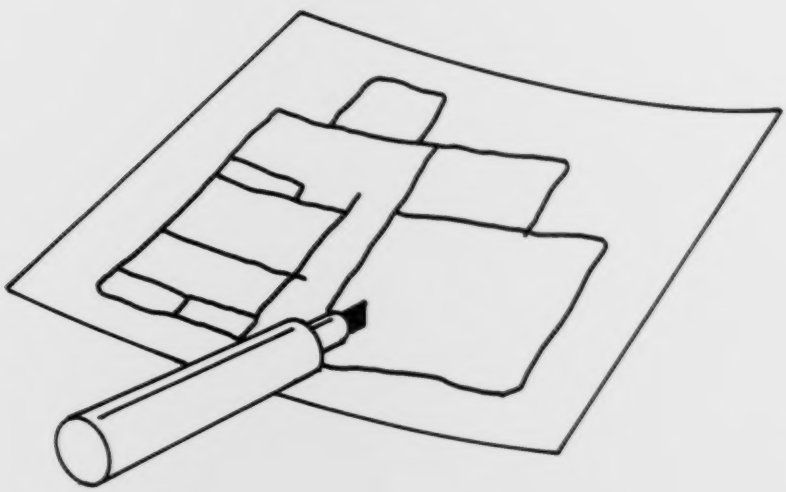
Activity: Drawing Floor Plans

Materials: Paper and markers

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Ask the students to draw floor plans of their houses and then describe them to each other. As the students describe their sketches they are to label each room, tell what is in the room, and describe where the room is located. Encourage the students to signal a topic change as they finish discussing one room and begin telling about another. *Examples:* "Now we will go into the kitchen." Or, "That's all about the kitchen. Now I'll talk about another room."



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Topicalization

Activity: What's My Line?

Materials: Cards with names of occupations

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: Students take turns drawing cards and giving clues about the specified occupations while the other students ask questions.

Example

Jimmy: (Describing a nurse) This person helps sick people get better.

Beth: Is it a doctor?

Jimmy: No.

Instructor: Can you give some more clues? What does the person wear?

Jimmy: This person wears all white.

Beth: Are you sure it's not a doctor?

Jimmy: No. This person helps the doctor.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Topicalization

Activity: Cause and Effect (Barad 1983)

Materials: Cards that describe consequences

Examples: The toast burned.
The tire was flat.
His finger hurt.

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Establish a topic and make comments
2. Stay on topic for appropriate number of utterances
3. Signal change of topic

Instructions: The students take turns selecting a card and describing possible causes for the consequence on that card. The other students may add other possible causes after the speaker is finished. If a student gives an inappropriate cause or makes an irrelevant comment, steer the conversation back to the topic.

Conversation

Definition and Discussion

Once the child has something to say and words to say it with, conversational capability begins to emerge. The orderly development of skills required for entry into the adult world of conversation can be observed.

The child must understand conversation as a two- (or more-) way street and must learn how to talk and listen appropriately. The ability to make statements, to ask and answer questions, and to take conversational turns is basic to the emergence of dialogue skill. This implies sufficient understanding of the context for the child to be appropriate in it. The child must learn not to interrupt, not to dominate the conversation, and not to avoid it.

An understanding of basic units of conversation is essential to the development of adult dialogue skill. Early on, children must learn about words as constituents of sentences and sentences as constituents of paragraphs. This implies an understanding of morpheme boundaries, word boundaries, and sentence boundaries. Sufficient linguistic capability is necessary to construct utterances that are syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically cohesive and that fit the sociolinguistic frame in which they are to be used (Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978; Ervin-Tripp 1976).

Perhaps telephone conversation is one of the highest levels of dialogue that can be observed in our society. Here all responsibility for successful communication is placed on the receptive and expressive linguistic abilities of the participants. Young children can be observed learning about telephone use in their play. The developmental sequence might be as follows:

1. The child picks up the phone, initiates conversation, and hangs up. ("Hi Daddy.")
2. The child picks up the phone, initiates and closes the conversation, and hangs up. ("Hi Daddy. Bye Daddy.")
3. The child picks up the phone, initiates the conversation, gives the message, closes the conversation, and hangs up. ("Hi Daddy. Bring home some milk. Bye Daddy.")

Producing this complete model shows that the child has acquired the notion of the beginning, the middle, and the end of a phone conversation. This is the foundation for development in telephone use that will come later.

INITIATING CONVERSATION

Initiating conversation embodies all the abilities the individual possesses: Starting the search for a topic, establishing a topic, and providing the feedback and encouragement necessary to other participants to get the conversation going and keep it going. It includes skill in gaining attention, signaling the beginning of the conversation, and making the necessary presuppositions for an appropriate exchange.

MAINTAINING CONVERSATION

The ability to maintain conversation is developmental. Very young children may maintain a topic through only one or two exchanges. By the time they are three years old, we expect children to maintain a conversation through three exchanges; by six years, eight to ten exchanges; and by ten years, they should be able to maintain conversation for twelve or more exchanges. While these expectations may furnish broad guidelines, it should be clear that maintaining a topic for an appropriate number of exchanges depends on the combined information and topic interests of the participants and the requirements and constraints of the context.

CHANGING TOPICS APPROPRIATELY

When it becomes necessary to change the topic, customary ways (pragmatically acceptable and expected) of signaling this change will be understood by all participants. In general, these conventions require that the old topic be terminated, usually by a brief summation, and some linguistic cue be given to establish a new topic:

"Well, we certainly had fun at the lake."

"That's great! Oh, by the way, I've been meaning to ask you what month you're taking your vacation next summer."

The chief violations of these conventions appear to be committed by individuals who change topics in the middle of their own utterances or respond to someone else's conversation with something completely off the topic. This causes considerable damage to the structure of the conversation, often resulting in confusion, misunderstanding, and communication breakdown.

TERMINATING THE CONVERSATION

Conversations are brought to a close much the same way as they are changed: By summation and conclusion, by introducing a new topic, and by signaling the conclusion by inflectional means. Young children may end their conversations by simply walking away. As they progress through the developmental stages, they become skillful at terminating a conversation. Regardless of the individual's skill in all other aspects of language use, communications cannot be completely successful if the speaker has not learned to terminate conversation effectively.

The goal for the clinician is to enable children to initiate conversations, to stay on the topic for an appropriate number of exchanges, and to signal topic changes or terminations in pragmatically acceptable ways.

Guidelines for Therapy

Children must have experiences so they will have content for their conversations. To teach initiation and termination of conversation, the clinician must incorporate a variety of skills into the experiences, or practice activities, including the entire range of eye contact, verbal turn-taking, and topicalization abilities.

Topic initiation and termination practice may be elicited by having the children take turns in the activities and by giving direct guidance, modeling, and feedback. If the children are primary age, practice initiation of topics as they take turns starting conversations. In the following lesson plans, this can be done by established *let's pretend* activities. For example, "Children, let's pretend I work at the drive-in and you all come into my place to get lunch. John, you can be the teacher on your lunch hour. Suzie, you can be the manager of the drive-in. Ivy, you are the mother buying lunch for her children." The children each get practice initiating and terminating specific conversations. If they fail to produce appropriate utterances, model the conversation for them:

Clinician: Are you ready to order?

Child: I don't know how.

Clinician: You might say something like "I want to order a hamburger and some fries." Now you tell me.

Child: I want to order cookies and milk.

Clinician: Good! You did that very well. You told me what you wanted. Now tell me what kind of cookies you want.

Children must receive feedback immediately following their part in the shared activity. In this same context, children's ability to begin and end sentences can be monitored. It may

be expedient to model as children begin these activities, but modeling should decrease as the children focus on the task. When they are thoroughly comfortable with their own roles, the children should have the opportunity to take the teacher role in this interaction.

The goals of (1) listening to the speaker, (2) volunteering to talk at appropriate times, and (3) responding when called upon, can be worked upon by directly elicited responses. Verbal turn-taking and asking and answering questions are all aspects that can be modeled. Provide specific models and prompts to help children practice these roles followed by appropriate and immediate feedback. This seems to be crucial for eliciting the desired communication from children and for increasing the likelihood that it will continue to occur.

The use of discourse connectors can be taught to intermediate children through a combination of explaining how *little words* can be used to connect phrases or sentences and then practicing their use. For example, "Sometimes we can change the subject by using small words to connect two thoughts together. I could say, 'I enjoyed the movie. Oh, by the way, did you see the new building over by the theater?' Now you practice changing the subject with me." If necessary, *direct prompt* ("Tell me . . .") the child through the experience.

Telephone practice can be provided at all levels by pretending to call the children and having them make a return call. Model the chosen targets on your end of the conversation and encourage the children to practice those same targets when they call you. Supply specific feedback as indicated by the children's needs.

Behavioral Characteristics for Conversation

The student

1. Initiates and terminates a conversation
2. Begins and ends a sentence
3. Volunteers to talk at appropriate times
4. Listens to the speaker
5. Takes a turn at an appropriate time in conversation
6. Asks and answers questions
7. Responds when called upon
8. Uses discourse connectors
9. Acknowledges other participants in the interaction
10. Opens and closes a phone conversation

Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Conversation

Preschool
- Sand Castles
- Telephone Answering
- Hair-Raising Experiment
- Carving a Pumpkin
- Polishing Shoes

Primary (K-3)
- Show and Tell
- Telephone Dialing
- Question Bags
- Missing Parts
- Pet Show

Intermediate (4-6)
- Mystery Solving
- Telephone Conversations
- Why Buy?
- Waitress/Waiter
- What's Silly?

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Conversation

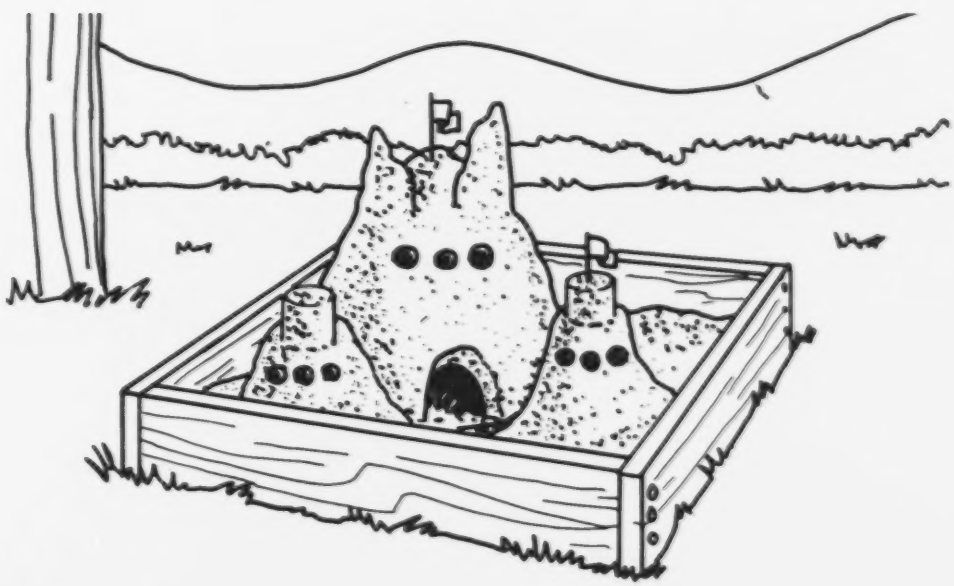
Activity: Sand Castles

Materials: Sandbox, shovel, toy bulldozer, dump truck, water, and toy people

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate time
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: As the students play in the sand using sandbox toys to construct a sand castle, ask questions about aspects of the construction. *Examples:* "How big should the castle be? What toys can we use to make the castle? How can we make the sand pack together? Where will the door be?" Encourage asking and answering questions, taking conversational turns, and staying on the topic. After the castle is constructed, have the students use the toy people to help gather materials to decorate the castle (seashells, feathers, beads, pebbles, etc.).



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Conversation

Activity: Telephone Answering

Materials: Toy telephones

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Listen to the speaker
2. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
3. Ask and answer questions
4. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction
5. Open and close phone conversations

Instructions: Role-play receiving telephone calls with a student. Focus the activity on how to answer the phone, how to greet the caller, finding out who the caller wishes to speak with, and calling that person to the phone.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Conversation

Activity: Hair-Raising Experiment (Vivian 1963)

Materials: Balloon, magnet, and paper clips

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: Demonstrate what happens when the magnet and paper clips are brought together. Then each student must ask to take a turn in order to play with them. Blow up the balloon and rub it on some fur or woolen cloth. Hold the balloon close to a student's hair and watch what happens. Encourage the students to participate in conversation by asking them to describe the attraction of the hair to the balloon.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Conversation

Activity: Carving a Pumpkin

Materials: Pumpkin, marking pen, knife, spoon, candle, match

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: **Caution: Working with a knife is dangerous. Place your hand over the children's hands as they use the knife.**

Ask the students to look at the materials and suggest ideas for their use. Guide their hands as they take turns carving the pumpkin. Encourage taking conversational turns to be sure each student has an opportunity to initiate ("Now I'm going to carve an eye.") and terminate ("Okay. I've finished carving an eye.") a conversation.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Conversation

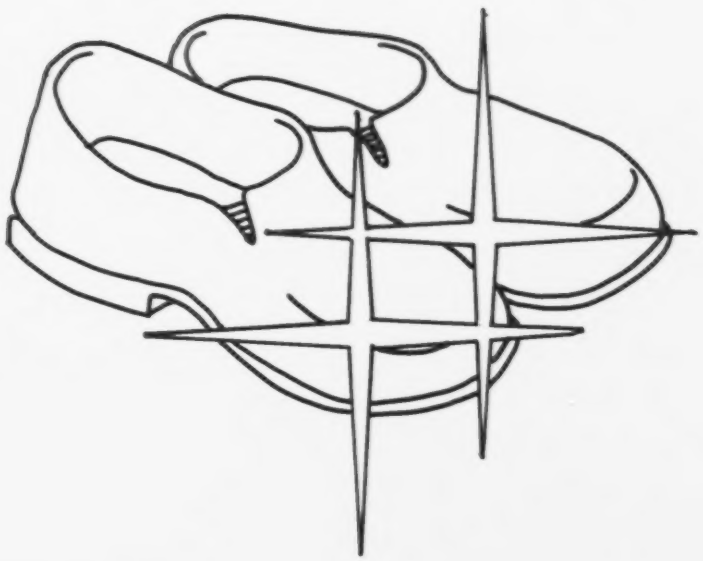
Activity: Polishing Shoes

Materials: Students' leather shoes, shoe wax or polish (different colors), cloths, and brushes

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: The day before the lesson, ask the students to wear leather shoes if they have them. For the lesson, instruct the students to remove their shoes and to ask for matching shoe polish, a cloth, and a brush. While they are polishing their shoes, have each student participate in the conversation by describing the different polishing steps as they are performed.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Conversation

Activity: Show and Tell

Materials: One prop or object from home

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon

Instructions: The day before the lesson, ask each student to bring in an object from home to share in a "Show and Tell" format. The students take turns describing their objects, telling where they came from, and talking about how they are used. Have the other students ask questions.

Example

Tony: I want to be first, I brought my sticker book.
It was a birthday present.

Gary: Who gave it to you?

Tony: My grandma. And she gave me smelly stickers, too.

Gary: What's your favorite?

Tony: Chocolate pudding.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Conversation

Activity: Telephone Dialing

Materials: Toy telephones

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Listen to the speaker
2. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
3. Ask and answer questions
4. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction
5. Open and close phone conversations

Instructions: Present this lesson in four sessions.

1. Teach the students to dial phone numbers—especially the operator and emergency numbers.
2. Teach the students their own addresses and phone numbers. Have them practice dialing their own numbers.
3. Go over the procedures for reporting an emergency:
   a. What happened
   b. Where did it happen
   c. Your name
4. Have each student role-play reporting different types of emergencies. *Examples:* A fire at home. A car accident in front of the house. A person who fell on the ice. Need for an ambulance because your grandmother is ill.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Conversation

Activity: Question Bags

Materials: Five paper bags labeled *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *When?*, and *Why?*
Slips of paper with WH questions

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Begin and end a sentence
2. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
3. Answer questions
4. Respond when called upon
5. Listen to the speaker

Instructions: Place the questions in the matching question bags. Ask each student to select a bag and draw a question from it. Read the question aloud. After the student has responded, encourage the other students to participate in the discussion based on the topic question.

Example

Instructor: (Reading the question) Who puts out fires?

Peter: A fire fighter.

Instructor: Who knows where the fire fighter works?

Sophia: I know. He works at the fire station.

Instructor: What does the fire fighter use in his work?

David: He drives a fire truck and uses a hose to spray water.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Conversation

Activity: Missing Parts

Materials: Pictures with missing parts

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Respond when called upon

Instructions: Show the students a picture that has missing parts. *Examples:* A house without doors or windows. Flowers without petals. A car without wheels. A pitcher without a handle. A chair without a leg. Ask the students to take turns discussing what parts are missing.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Conversation

Activity: Pet Show

Materials: Stuffed animals, leashes, hoops, sticks, pet treats (made from cardboard)

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Use discourse connectors

Instructions: Ask each student to select an animal. As the announcer at a pet show, interview the students about the names of their pets and the tricks the pets can do. As the students demonstrate their pets' tricks and reward them with treats, encourage them to discuss the performance.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Conversation

Activity: Mystery Solving

Materials: Situational cards or pictures depicting various mysteries

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
3. Listen to the speaker
4. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
5. Ask and answer questions
6. Respond when called upon
7. Use discourse connectors
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: Show the students one of the mystery pictures. The students take turns asking questions to determine what happened. After they have formulated ideas about who committed the act and where and when the act was committed, they take turns making statements that solve the mystery.

Examples

Who took the teacher's apple?

Who put the frog in the teacher's desk?

Who ate the container of chocolate ice cream?

Who let the dog out of the yard?

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Conversation

Activity: Telephone Conversations

Materials: Toy telephones

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Listen to the speaker
2. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
3. Ask and answer questions
4. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction
5. Open and close phone conversations

Instructions: Model appropriate telephone usage including how to open and close telephone conversations. Have the students role-play conversations with the telephones.

Examples

Call a friend with an invitation to come over to spend the night.
Call your grandmother to tell her about your day at school.
Call the pizza parlor to order a pizza.
Call your scout leader to complete plans for a camping trip.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Conversation

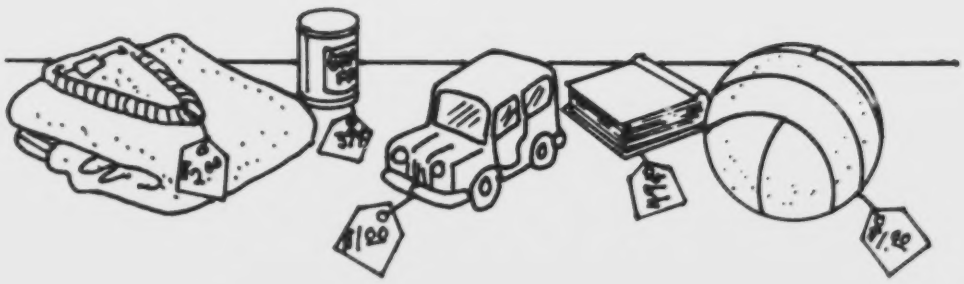
Activity: Why Buy?

Materials: Pictures of household items, clothes, foods, and toys with price tags attached

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction
8. Use discourse connectors

Instructions: Show the students pictures of household items, clothes, foods, and toys. Ask one student to pretend to be the clerk. Another student is the customer and gives three to five reasons for wanting to buy selected items. Encourage the buyer to ask the clerk questions about the use, size, durability, flavor, etc. of the items. The students may also converse about the cost of items.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Conversation

Activity: Waitress/Waiter

Materials: Waitress/waiter props such as an apron, pad of paper, pen, and menu

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: Have the students take turns role-playing a waitress or waiter. The other students take turns being customers who are ordering lunch.

Example

Nathan: What do you want for lunch?

Laura: I'll have bean soup and salad.

Nathan: Do you want a cup of soup or a bowl?

Laura: Just a cup of soup.

Nathan: What do you want on your salad?

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Conversation

Activity: What's Silly?

Materials: Pictures depicting something wrong or silly

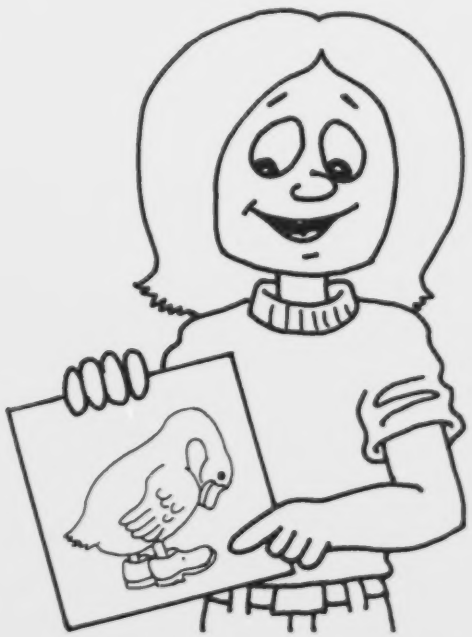
Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Initiate and terminate a conversation
2. Begin and end a sentence
3. Volunteer to talk at appropriate times
4. Listen to the speaker
5. Take a turn at appropriate time in conversation
6. Ask and answer questions
7. Respond when called upon
8. Acknowledge other participants in the interaction

Instructions: Give each student a picture. Have the students take turns describing what's wrong with their pictures and what needs to be changed or added to correct the picture.

Examples of Pictures

A table with shoes at the bottom of its legs
A ball player swinging a bat at a football
An airplane flying upside-down
A person with a shoe on one foot and a boot on the other



Use of Register

Definition and Discussion

Frequently the *way we talk* to people, not *what we say* to them, either enhances or detracts from dialogue effectiveness. All of us can remember having reacted at some time with feelings like

"Don't talk to me like that!"
"Who do you think you are to boss me around?"
"You talk to me like you think I'm stupid."

Even younger children are likely to react with a statement like, "I'm not a baby!" The commonality in all these reactions is a response to some inappropriate use of register.

Each one of us begins when still a small child to construct an entire set of registers, or formats, to be used to talk to people in various social roles. These registers are used as patterns for various communications. Stylized, culturally defined ways exist for addressing authority figures, peers, family members, teachers, younger and older individuals, and handicapped or infirm individuals. These registers are based on presuppositions and for the most part are accurate. However, there are times when these presuppositions are faulty, leading to less than appropriate communications.

Most adult speakers have formulated a register that is acceptable for communicating with each group of people they customarily interact with, such as parents, children, peers, and employers. Even after the registers are established, a speaker's task is twofold: Speakers must be able to fit new communicative partners into an appropriate category or register. They must also know when they do not have registers to meet their needs and be able to formulate at least a temporary register for that exchange.

Register development appears normally in most children. They have ways they talk to adults, peers, children younger than they are, and babies. When entering school, they have to master the school register quickly (Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978; Bates 1976a; Moerk 1977). In fact, failure to accomplish this seems to create problems, especially for children with learning disabilities, causing them to be perceived as rude and inappropriate. These children should be taught appropriate registers and how to use them for success in school.

The mother-infant register, or *motherese,* exemplifies a highly important and sophisticated application of register. Use of this register appears to be innate and is one of the main elements in teaching first language to infants (Snow 1972; Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978; Moerk 1977). Through motherese, major caregivers begin giving children language examples that are highly simplified, redundant, and carefully inflected for best understanding. Motherese stimulates the child to practice eye contact, turn-taking, and appropriate simplified syntax, semantics, phonology, and pragmatics. Children also begin to learn about topicalization and conversation. As they become more capable with language, mothers (major caregivers) automatically present gradually more difficult stimuli that keep pace with the children's development.

Children's failure to learn to use register adequately has an early effect on their communication development—slowing, distorting, or even stopping it. The clinician must help establish important registers, observe these registers, intercede when they are not developing appropriately, and educate youngsters in their effective use.

Guidelines for Therapy

Preschoolers need to learn how to talk appropriately to parents, teachers, adult relatives, peers, siblings of all ages, and babies. The clinician has the task of getting children to realize that there are different ways to talk to different people *and* that if they don't talk to them in the expected ways, the people will not be satisfied with the interaction. When this occurs, the children will not feel successful as communicators. Since the feedback is direct, carefully chosen ways of identifying desired registers are important and direct discussions about the interaction are desirable. For example, young Cindy, riding home from preschool with her mother, was eyeing the bag of homemade cookies on the seat. This register-learning interaction took place:

Cindy: Gimmie a cookie. (Demand inflection)

Mother: Is that how you ask me for something?

Cindy: I said, "Gimmie a cookie." (Louder, more demanding)

Mother: Don't ask me in that voice. (Mother is modeling proper tone of voice)

Cindy: Gimmie a cookie? (Interrogative inflection; same demand effect)

Mother: Your voice is better now. Can you ask a polite question? Do you know the magic word?

Cindy: Will you give me a cookie please? (Appropriate)

Mother: Very good! I'm very happy to give you a cookie.

This same format and progression can be used in conducting many of the activities in this sourcebook. The various registers needed by children develop through practice.

For primary children, present the same basic information at a slightly higher level. These children can learn to choose from a number of registers in their repertoires. The lesson plans in this book offer a number of activities that stimulate this ability. Focus your interactions on helping the children reflect on what went wrong. This can include practice with prosody and feedback.

Teacher: Do you think Jamie is happy with what happened?

Jamie: No. He didn't mean to make the teacher mad.

Teacher: Why do you think the teacher got mad? (You may need to guide to greater or lesser degrees in this area. You want to lead the child to an understanding that he was perceived as *rude*.) How could Jamie have talked to his teacher so the teacher wouldn't get mad?

Jamie: I could use my polite voice. I could ask nicer.

Teacher: Good! Let's practice this.

At the intermediate level, children can work on the upper ranges of the same elements by examining examples of failed communication. In this kind of activity, a child's entire range of metapragmatic abilities comes into play.

Behavioral Characteristics for Use of Register

The student

1. Uses language appropriate to the context
2. Uses language appropriate to the people (social status, age, sex)
3. Uses intonation and stress appropriately

Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Use of Register

Preschool
- Play People
- Dress-Up
- Mother and Baby Animals
- Paper Bag Costumes
- Animal Sounds

Primary (K-3)
- Puppet Show
- Grocery Store
- Family Album
- Paper Dolls
- Who's Talking?

Intermediate (4-6)
- Role-Playing
- Interviewing Famous People
- Auction
- Writing Lyrics
- A Ghostly Tale

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Register

Activity: Play People

Materials: Toy people (family figures) and house

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Ask the students to use toy figures and house to role-play different family members in different situations. The students will take turns with different roles thus practicing register changes.

Situation Examples

1. Mother asks the children what they want for breakfast and the children respond.
2. The children ask Mother for permission to go outside and play.
3. Father asks the children what they want to play or do and the children respond.
4. The children play together in their room.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Register

Activity: Dress-Up

Materials: Variety of clothes and props (police officer's hat, fire fighter's hat, stethoscope and white jacket, dress and hat, jacket and tie, diaper or bottles and baby bonnet)

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Ask the students to choose their own costumes. Have them take turns role-playing the characters (police officer, fire fighter, doctor, mother, father, and baby). Encourage the students to use language, stress, and intonation patterns appropriate to their characters.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Register

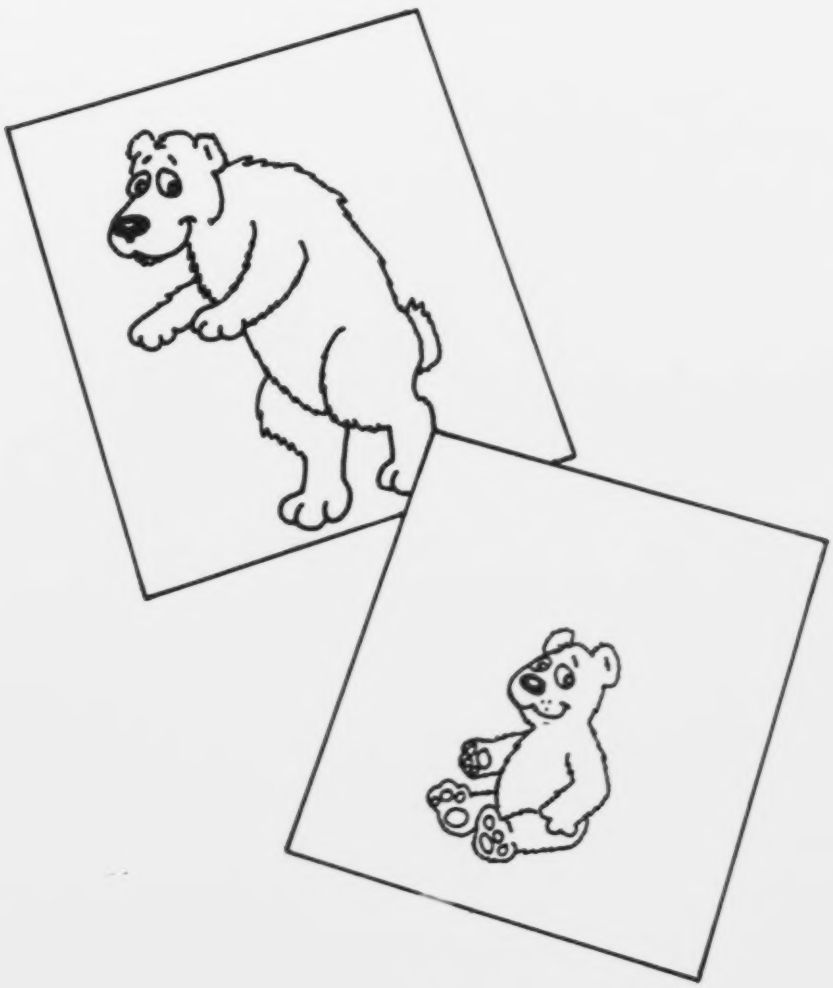
Activity: Mother and Baby Animals

Materials: Pictures of mother animals and matching pictures of baby animals

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Have the students take turns matching the mother and baby animal pictures. Ask them to make animal sounds that are associated with the animals and to use appropriate stress and intonation patterns to differentiate between the mother and baby sounds.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Register

Activity: Paper Bag Costumes

Materials: Large paper bags, construction paper, yarn, crayons, scissors, glue, pictures of characters for role-playing. *Examples:* witch, ghost, goblins (Halloween); Santa, elves, Rudolph (Christmas); favorite TV or cartoon characters

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

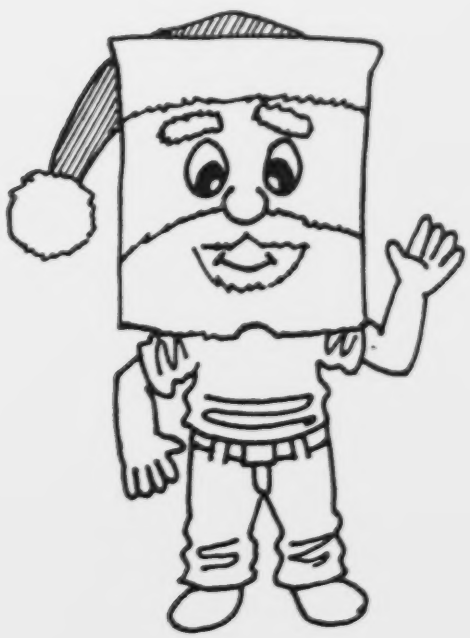
Instructions: Let each student choose a picture. Guide the students in making their costumes to match the selected pictures. The students put on their costumes and role-play their characters in short skits.

Example

Santa: Elves, let's load the sleigh!

Elves: Yes, sir.
I'm ready.
Let's get to work.

Rudolph: May I help pull the sleigh tonight?



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Register

Activity: Animal Sounds

Materials: Cassette tape of animal sounds—cow, dog, cat, frog, duck, chicken, etc.
Pictures of the same animals

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Show the animal pictures to the students as they listen to the tape. Ask them to match an animal picture to each sound. Show the pictures again and have the students produce the sound associated with each animal.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Register

Activity: Puppet Show

Materials: Various puppets and puppet theatre

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Give each student a puppet. Tell the students the story they will be acting out. Have them take turns playing different characters and practicing register changes.

Story Examples

1. Goldilocks and the Three Bears
2. Three Billy Goats Gruff
3. Show White
4. Little Red Riding Hood
5. Original plays created by the students

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Register

Activity: Grocery Store

Materials: Toy cash register, grocer's apron, toy food or empty food boxes

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: The students take turns role-playing the grocer and a customer. The customer may be a child or an adult. Encourage the students to demonstrate sufficient courtesy in these interactions.

Example

Donna: Hello, Mr. Evans.

Grocer: Hello, Donna. May I help you find something?

Donna: Yes, you may. My mother wants two pounds of cheese and a box of crackers.

Grocer: Here they are. That will be $5.25.

Donna: (Takes items and leaves.)

Instructor: You forgot to say "Thank you."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Register

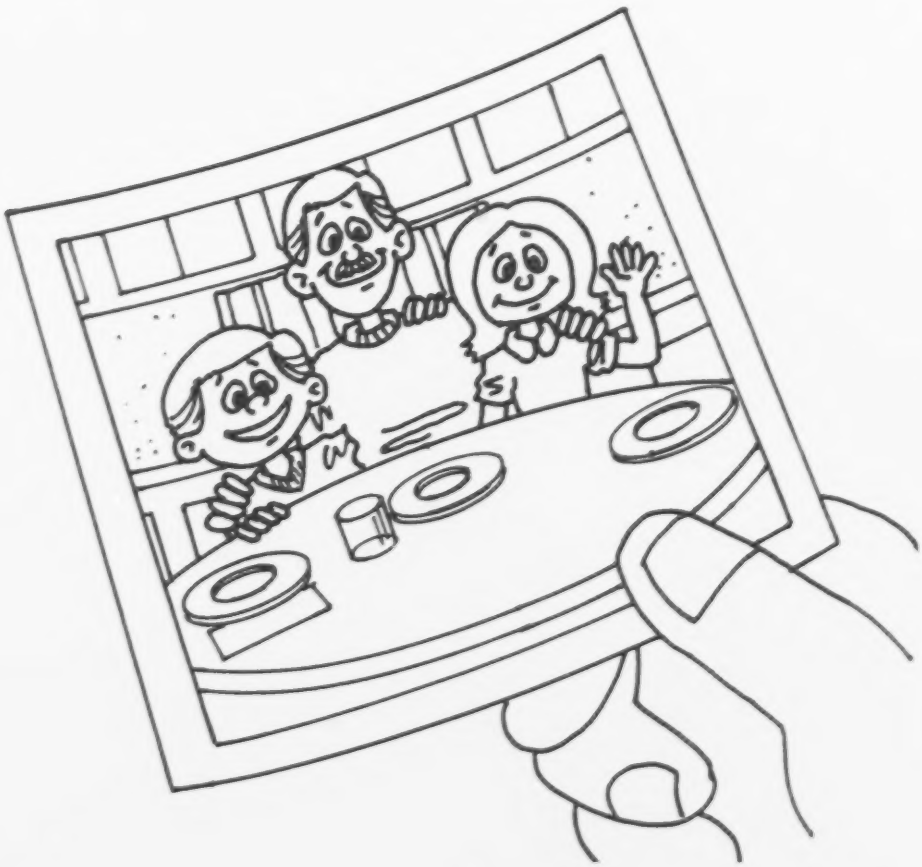
Activity: Family Album

Materials: Photos of student's family and friends or magazine pictures of family scenes

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Show the pictures to the students and discuss what is happening. Have the students take turns role-playing their family members and friends in an everyday situation. For example, the picture may be of a kitchen with breakfast foods on the counter, and a parent and three children at the table. In the dialogue, the parent could ask each child, "What do you want for breakfast?" The children answer courteously.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Register

Activity: Paper Dolls

Materials: Paper doll families and community helpers

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Let each student select a paper doll to role-play. Then have the students take turns role-playing family members interacting with themselves and community helpers. For example, in one scene a father could remind his son to brush his teeth before going to bed. In another scene, a police officer could warn a child not to cross the street before looking both ways.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Register

Activity: Who's Talking?

Materials: Cassette tape of various people talking—mother, father, baby, fire fighter, police officer, doctor, store clerk, etc.
Pictures of the same people

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Show the pictures to the students. Discuss the types of expressions that are associated with each person. Have the students practice register changes used by each person. Play the tape and ask the student to take turns guessing who is speaking.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Register

Activity: Role-Playing

Materials: Pictures of people doing things together to illustrate social development skills

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Show the pictures to the students. Ask them to role-play the dialogue depicted in the picture.

Examples

Helping the teacher
Playing together
Helping mother
Shopping together
In a restaurant

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Register

Activity: Interviewing Famous People

Materials: Cards with the names of famous people
Play microphone

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Ask a student to be the interviewer. The other students draw cards to indicate which famous people they will be. If necessary, review basic information about the famous people with the students. The interviewer asks questions to elicit information from the famous person about his or her life.

Some People to Interview

1. The President of the United States
2. Columbus
3. Miss America
4. An Olympic gold-medal winner
5. The Queen of England
6. The captain of a space ship
7. A famous TV character or star

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Register

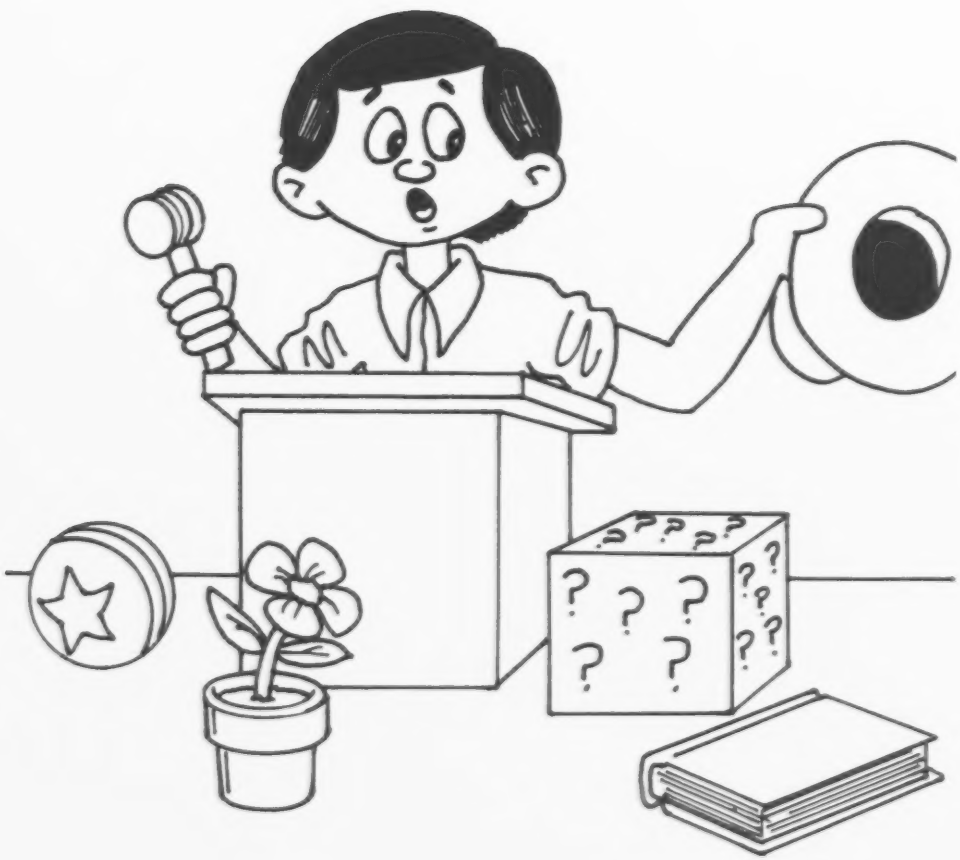
Activity: Auction

Materials: Items or pictures of items to auction off

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: One student plays the part of the auctioneer and auctions off the items to the other students or buyers. The auctioneer describes the item and suggests an opening bid. The buyers take turns making bids to buy the items.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Register

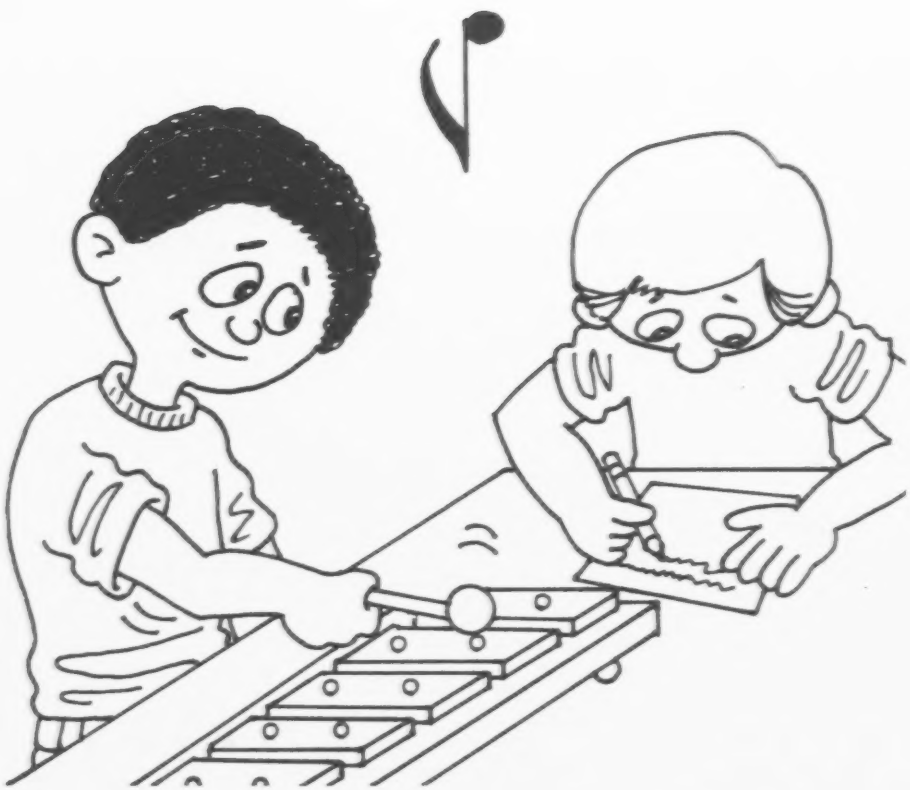
Activity: Writing Lyrics

Materials: Paper and pencil
Xylophone or tape recorder

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Let the students listen to an unknown line of melody and ask them to write lyrics to fit the music. Then ask them to tell why they have written those lyrics, what their songs are about, and who they would choose to record their songs. Give the students opportunity to perform their songs for the other students.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Register

Activity: *A Ghostly Tale* (Barad 1983)

Materials: Ghosts cut out of construction paper, each labeled with a different emotion such as angry, happy, sad, sick, surprised, tired, excited, scared

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use language appropriate to context
2. Use language appropriate to people (social status, age, sex)
3. Use intonation and stress appropriately

Instructions: Give each student a paper ghost. Have the students take turns role-playing the specified emotions. Guide the students in a discussion of the various facial expressions that are associated with each emotion. If necessary, discuss vocabulary and dialogue associated with each emotion. Label ghosts as adults or children, parents or teachers, friends or family and have the students take turns role-playing in different relationships.

Use of Syntactic Forms to Convey Pragmatic Information

Definition and Discussion

One of the most important aspects of pragmatics is the way it overlaps and intersects with all other communication areas. The connection between syntax and pragmatics illustrates one of the most crucial aspects of syntax: The adept user of pragmatics has learned to make specific syntactic choices that make the spoken utterance convey pragmatically appropriate information.

DELETION OF REDUNDANCY

Speakers' awareness of communication redundancies is indicated as they learn to delete redundant information and to adjust communication to accommodate it. This development can be observed in children as they gradually learn to delete redundancy in their own utterances and in the question-answer exchange.

WORD ORDER—THE GIVEN-NEW CONTRACT

Young children appear to be remarkably free of anxiety about word-order constraints in their language construction. As language ability increases, need for specific organization such as word order becomes obvious. In part, word order conforms to the syntactic requirements of our language. In other and more important ways, it is a function of pragmatic appropriateness. Speakers of the language have come to expect specific semantic/syntactic elements in sentences to occupy certain positions. By unstated agreement, members of our communication group honor the given-new contract that organizes communications so the old information is stated first and the new information follows it. Pragmatically, listeners expect this contract to be honored unless the speaker changes it for emphasis and signals this change prosodically. For children, the task becomes an extension of topic-comment activity as they learn to put the old information first and follow it with new information or to signal changes in the order.

CHOICE OF SYNTACTIC ELEMENTS

Syntactic word choices are often governed by a speaker's *presuppositions*, which are beliefs held by the speaker about what the listener already knows. These presuppositions govern what the speaker says and are signaled by syntactic choices.

Children's appropriate choices of syntactic elements often depend on their ability to make appropriate presuppositions. They seem to make unlimited presuppositions initially. Development is obvious as children learn what not to presuppose (Bates 1976a). "The ability to predict whether or not the listener shares a given assumption and to plan one's utterances accordingly, is one of the highest achievements in pragmatic development." (Bates 1976b, p. 29).

The choice of the determiner ***a*** or ***the*** expresses presuppositions the speaker has about the listener. If the specific subject is not known to the speaker, the determiner ***a*** is used as in "There is a dog in the yard." If the speaker believes the listener knows which dog is in the yard, the determiner ***the*** will be used to make a more specific statement as in "The dog bit the mailman."

Pronominalization reflects pragmatic information in the same way. When a personal reference is introduced into conversation for the first time, a noun is used: "This is John." When John is referred to subsequently, the personal pronoun is used as the speaker discards the redundancy: "He is an airline pilot."

Relative clauses and adjectives are selected according to pragmatic knowledge. Their use is dictated when more information must be coded to make the sentences acceptably specific. For example, "Nobody lives at my house" requires a relative clause to give it specificity: "Nobody from my playschool lives at my house." The use of deictic forms such as ***this*** and ***that*** also carry pragmatic information and play an important role in making language more specific.

As children develop communication abilities, all syntactic elements are used more effectively to transmit pragmatically appropriate communications. If children do not learn to do this naturally, the clinician must provide them with appropriate stimulation and feedback.

Guidelines for Therapy

Pragmatically appropriate use of syntax appears to be addressed entirely by expansion, which means putting the child's utterance into the correct grammatical form (Johnston and Johnston 1984). It is extremely difficult to train very young children in this area. Since awkwardness of communication rather than failure to communicate is the chief manifestation, remediation may be reasonable in preschoolers only if the training exercises the same language structures that are used by the language family. Even with primary and intermediate children, it is difficult to train grammar structures that are not used at home.

At all levels, expansion is the main technique that should be used to expand children's grammar from the lowest levels, where errors occur, to the higher ones in a progressive hierarchical way. For example, with preschoolers:

David: New car me rided.

Clinician: Oh. You rode in the new car. How nice. Tell me, "I rode in the new car."

David: I rode in the new car.

Clinician: Good. That's the way to say it.

With primary children:

Charlotte: Him playing yard.

Clinician: Yes, he is playing in his yard. Tell me "He is playing in his yard."

Charlotte: Him is playing in his yard.

Clinician: That's better. He is playing in his yard.

With intermediate children:

Alison: My mommy is mad. My mommy she really burn it this time.

Clinician: Your mommy really burned it? What did she burn? You need to tell me. Did you know that when you say "she" that means the same as "my mommy" so you don't need both? Let's say it this way, "She really burned the cake this time." Now you tell me.

Alison: She really burned the cake this time.

Clinician: Great!

If the children have sufficient maturity, model various prosodic lines and have the children practice them with appropriate sentences:

Roy: Where are we going.

Clinician: You asked a question but it didn't sound like a question. Listen. Where are we going? Do you hear how my voice goes up at the end? Let's try it. Now ask me again. "Where are we going?"

Roy: Where are we going?

Clinician: Good! Shall we try some others?

This area of pragmatics deals with the principle of providing enough information but not too much. Such questions as "Which man do you mean?" or "Who is he?" elicit more specificity and can be followed by an appreciative response:

Lanny: Those men are cold. He give he coat to the man.

Clinician: Yes. Those two men are cold. Who is "he" who gave the blanket?

Lanny: This boy.

Clinician: Good. Tell me which man this boy gave the blanket to.

Lanny: (Points.)

Clinician: I see. This boy gave the blanket to the man who did not have a coat. Tell me the sentence now.

Lanny: This boy gave the blanket to the man who did not have a coat.

Clinician: Good. Now let's make up some other sentences to go with these pictures.

Deletion of redundant information can be dealt with directly as soon as children are old enough to see redundancy when it is pointed out:

Courtney: Mommy go store. Me go store.

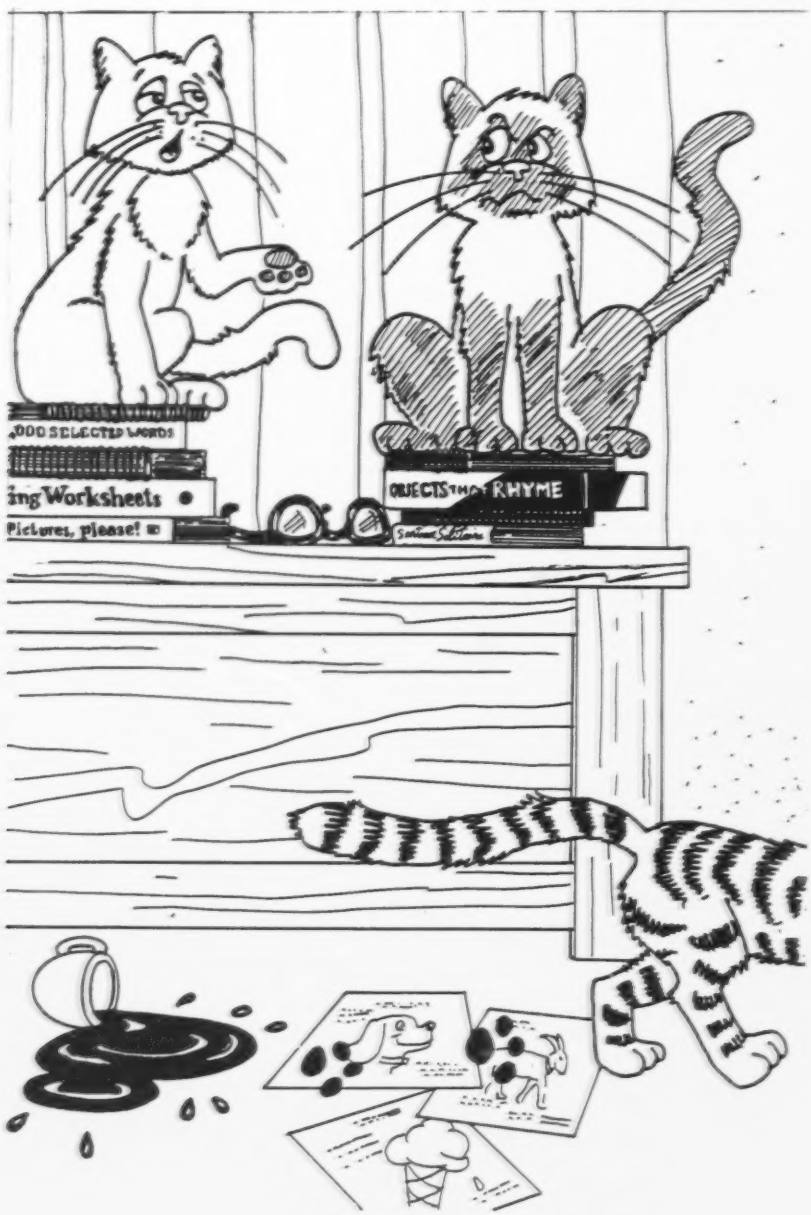
Clinician: You told me about the store two times. How about saying, "Mommy and I go to the store." Tell me "Mommy and I go to the store."

In general, these guidelines relate to letting children know when they have told you too much, asking for more information when they have not told you enough, and providing immediate and incisive feedback when they have it right.

Behavioral Characteristics for Use of Syntactic Forms

The student

1. Uses all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, and interrogative)
2. Uses grammar appropriate for the context
3. Orders old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Deletes redundant information
5. Uses referents appropriately in conversation
6. Uses appropriate discourse connectors
7. Uses pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information



Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Use of Syntactic Forms to Convey Pragmatic Information

Preschool
- Making Fruit Juice
- Science Experiment—Balloon and Carbonation
- Making Valentines
- Growing Seedlings
- Colored Sand

Primary (K-3)
- Coloring Eggs
- Cigar-Box Flannel Board
- Making Placemats
- Going Fishing
- Science Experiment—Colored Discs

Intermediate (4-6)
- Identical Toy Towns
- Science Experiment—Iodine and Starch
- Greeting Cards
- Science Experiment—Sugar Attracts Water
- Scrambled Sentences

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Syntactic Forms

Activity: Making Fruit Juice

Materials: Pitcher, water, spoon, can opener, glasses, napkins, juice mix

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Explain the activity and show the students the materials. While making the juice, provide input at the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic level. When errors occur, use the expansion technique, pages 82-83, to elicit the correct responses.

Example (Interrogative Forms)

Instructor: Mark, ask me for the juice.

Mark: You will give me the juice.

Instructor: You didn't ask me, Mark. Try it this way, "Will you give me the juice, please?"

Mark: Will you give me the juice, please?

Instructor: That's good.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Syntactic Forms

Activity: Science Experiment—Balloon and Carbonation

Materials: A deflated balloon, magic marker, vinegar, an empty 10-ounce pop bottle, baking soda

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation

Instructions: Provide language input for the students during the following steps:

1. Draw a face on the deflated balloon with the magic marker.
2. Pour one inch of vinegar into the empty bottle.
3. Add 2 teaspoons of baking soda.
4. Quickly secure the balloon over the neck of the bottle.
5. Observe the balloon expanding. Students may need prompting for using appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms through the expansion technique.

Example

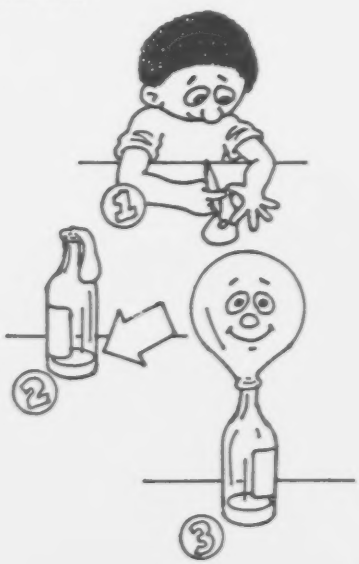
Instructor: What's happening?

Matthew: The balloon blowed up.

Instructor: It's still blowing up. Tell me, "The balloon is blowing up."

Matthew: The balloon is blowing up.

Instructor: That's it.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Syntactic Forms

Activity: Making Valentines

Materials: Construction paper, waxed paper, crayons, dull knife, iron, glue

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: To prepare construction paper: Cut a heart shape from one end of the paper; discard the heart and fold the paper in half lengthwise. Make one for each student. Have each student ask for a piece of prepared construction paper, two pieces of waxed paper, and crayons. Instruct them to scrape the sides of the crayons with a dull knife so the scrapings fall over one piece of waxed paper. Place the second piece of waxed paper over the crayon shavings. The instructor or aid irons the two pieces of waxed paper together. Glue this to the inside of the folded construction paper so it shows through the cut-out heart. As students make their valentines, provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms using the expansion technique, pages 82-83.

Example (Referents and Pronouns)

Instructor: Describe a valentine that someone has made.

Carrie: Him valentine is red and blue. Him valentine is pretty.

Instructor: Whose valentine is red and blue?

Carrie: John's.

Instructor: Good. Tell me, "John's valentine is red and blue. His valentine is pretty."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Syntactic Forms

Activity: Growing Seedlings

Materials: Seeds, drinking glass, tap water, humus, flower pot, plastic bag (without holes), paper clips

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Explain the growing process and the materials to the students. Guide them through the following steps:

1. Soak the seeds in a glass of water for one day.
2. Plant them in humus in the flower pot. Water the soil thoroughly. Place the pot in a plastic bag. Fold the open end over several times and secure it with paper clips. Place the pot in a warm, dark place.
3. Watch the pot. In a week to ten days, leaves will appear. Place the pot, still in the bag, in the sun. Do not remove the bag or water the seedling.
4. When the seedling is three inches high, remove the plastic bag and water the plant regularly. Keep it in a sunny place.

Encourage all the students to participate in the activity and in the related conversation. Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms using the expansion technique, pages 82-83.

Example (Redundancy)

Instructor: What happened to the plant in the last three days?

Eddie: The plant it growed. The plant it got more leaves.

Instructor: You told me "The plant it" two times. Let's make it shorter and say, "The plant grew and has more leaves."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Syntactic Forms

Activity: Colored Sand

Materials: Large pieces of paper, white sand, colored chalk, jars with cork-lids

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Show the students a finished project: A jar filled with layers of colored sand. Give each student a large piece of paper. Have the students take turns asking for some white sand, which they pour into small piles on their paper. Have the students ask for colored chalk, which they break into small pieces. As the students hold the chalk over the sand, they grind the pieces between their fingers, letting the colored dust fall onto the sand. To blend the color into the sand, the students stir the mixture with their fingers. Then they pour the colored sand into their jars and repeat the process until their jars are full. Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms and encourage all the students to participate in the related conversation.

Example (Negation)

Instructor: Brian, is John's sand blue?

Brian: John's sand is no blue. It is green.

Instructor: Tell me, "John's sand is not blue. It is green."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Coloring Eggs

Materials: Hard-cooked eggs, egg coloring kit, water, *blindboard* or barrier

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Give two of the students eggs and egg-coloring materials. Their task is to make both sets of eggs look identical. Place the blindboard between the students' work areas. The students take turns giving directions for each decorating step. Prompt the students as needed to help them use appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms and to give sufficient information.

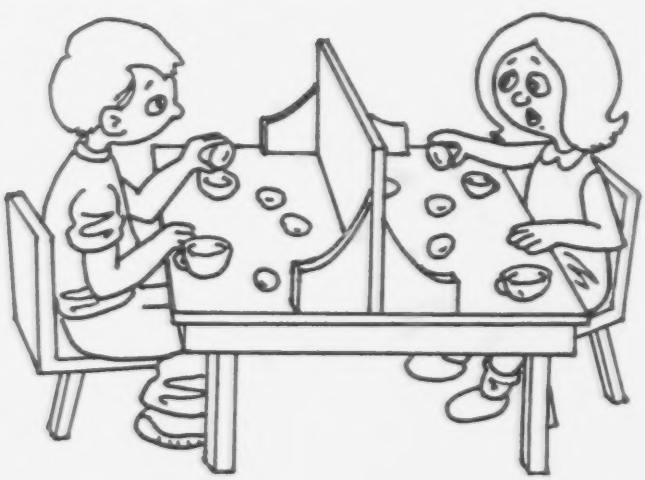
Example (Relative Clauses)

Judith: Make a white dot on the end of the egg.

Instructor: Remember, Judith, the eggs need to look alike. Tell Russell which egg.

Judith: Take the egg and put a white dot on it. The egg is blue.

Instructor: Try this, "Take the egg that is blue and put a white dot on it."



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Cigar-Box Flannel Board

Materials: Cigar boxes, flannel, flannel cut-outs

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

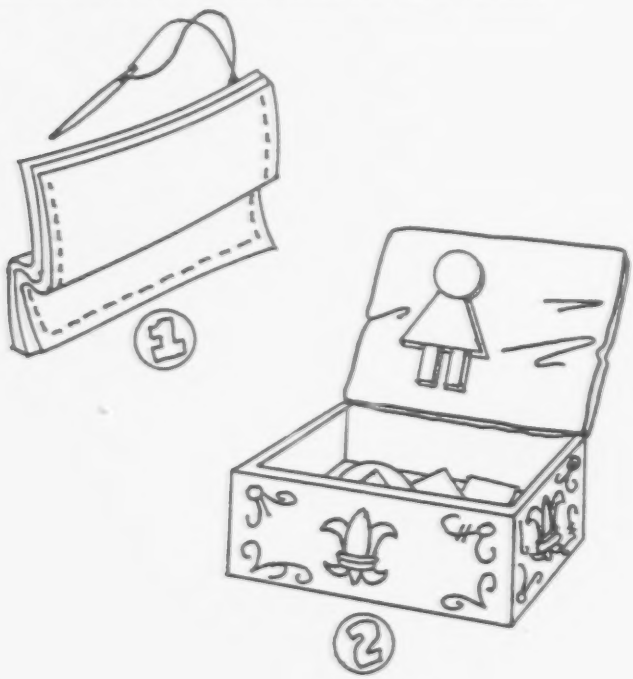
Instructions: Make individual flannel boards by covering lids of cigar boxes with flannel slipcovers. Give each student a cigar box and flannel cut-outs. Position the students so they cannot see each other's flannel boards. One student arranges flannel cut-outs on the flannel board, then instructs the other students to position their cut-outs so all the completed arrangements will be identical.

Example (Referents)

Jesse: Put the square over the yellow circle.

Instructor: Which square? There is a red one, a blue one, and a white one.

Jesse: Put the white square over the yellow circle.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Making Placemats

Materials: Construction paper, colored marking pencils or paints, laminating sheets

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Each student decorates a piece of construction paper to use as a placemat. Cover the decorated paper with a piece of laminating sheet. Ask the students to describe what they are doing. Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms and encourage all the students to participate in the related conversation.

Example (Declarative Statement)

Instructor: Meg, is Billy drawing a house?

Meg: No. Is he drawing a car.

Instructor: Your words asked a question. Tell me, "He is drawing a car."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Going Fishing

Materials: Fishing pole with string and magnet
Construction-paper fish with paper clips
Action pictures attached to each fish

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: The students take turns fishing. They must describe in detail each picture they "catch." Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms and encourage all the students to participate in the activity and in the related conversation.

Example (Grammar in Context)

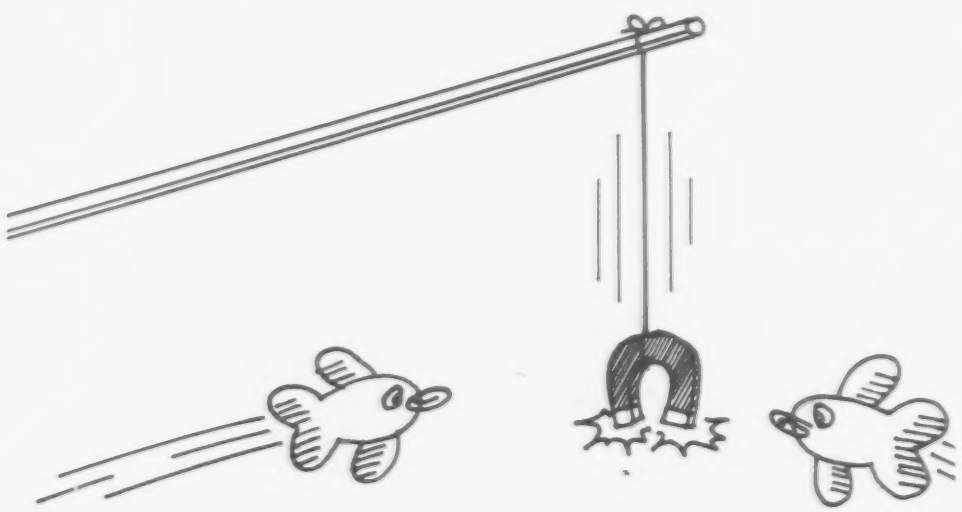
Instructor: Tell me what you see in your picture.

William: The boy hitted a home run.

Instructor: Can you tell from the picture that he has already hit a home run?

William: No.

Instructor: Let's say, "The boy might hit a home run."



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Science Experiment—Colored Discs (Vivian 1963)

Materials: Cardboard cards, pencil, scissors, water-color paints, string, compass

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Use a compass to draw a 1½-inch circle on each card. Mark off six equal divisions around the circle and draw straight lines from these points to the center of the circle. Cut out the circles. Give each student a circle. Instruct them to paint the sections of their circles different colors. Let them dry. Then make two small holes about ½ inch apart near the center of each circle. Pass a 3½-foot piece of string through the two holes and tie the ends together. The student holds a loop in each hand. Ask someone to slide the circle on the string until it is midway between the student's hands and to turn the circle over the string until the string is tightly twisted on both sides. Tell the student to pull gently on the loops. The circle will spin and the students will see that when it is spinning, the bright colors merge and produce white.

Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms. Encourage the students to participate in the activity and in the related conversation.

Example (Grammar in Context)

Instructor: What happened when we spun the circles?

Maria: It will turn white.

Instructor: It already happened. Tell me, "It turned white."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Identical Toy Towns

Materials: 2 cardboard punch-out town sets, *blindboard* or barrier

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Give two students cardboard town sets. Place a blindboard between their work areas. Tell the students to set up their towns so they are identical. The students take turns giving directions to each other on how to lay out the town. Encourage the student who receives instructions to ask questions to clarify positions. Prompt the student who is giving directions to delete redundant information and to signal which information is new.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Science Experiment—Iodine and Starch

Materials: Iodine
Food items that contain starch—potatoes, bread, macaroni, spaghetti
Food items that don't contain starch—fruit, butter, celery, carrots

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Close supervision of this activity will help prevent spillage and misuse of the materials.

Show the students the iodine and food items. Explain that iodine has a chemical reaction with food containing starch. This causes the food to turn blue. Ask the students if they know which food items contain starch. Can they predict which food items will turn blue when iodine is added?

Example (Redundancy)

Instructor: Tell me about three food items that were mixed with the iodine.

Ralph: The potato turned blue. The bread turned blue. The macaroni turned blue.

Instructor: You can say that more simply by telling me, "The potato, bread, and macaroni turned blue."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Greeting Cards

Materials: Old wallpaper book, scissors, markers

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Have the students select paper from the wallpaper book to use for their greeting cards. Ask them to cut out large shapes such as circles, squares, or rectangles and to fold them in half. Then the students give directions to each other for decorating the cards with markers and for writing messages on the inside.

Vary this activity by preparing command cards for the students to follow. The students take turns drawing cards that specify what kind of direction to give.

Examples

Card	*Student's Response*
Imperative	"Make a heart with a pink marker."
Declarative	"The heart is pink."
Negative	"Make a heart but don't use the blue or green marker."
Exclamatory	"Wow! Look at that bright pink heart!"
Interrogative	"Can you make a heart with a pink marker?"

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Science Experiment—Sugar Attracts Water (Vivian 1963)

Materials: Bowl of water, wooden matchstick, cube of sugar, soap

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information
7. Use appropriate discourse connectors

Instructions: Cut a wooden matchstick into small pieces. Float the pieces on the surface of the water. Place a cube of sugar in the center of the water. The wood pieces are attracted toward it because the sugar is porous and draws water into itself. Remove the sugar and place a small sliver of soap on the surface of the water. The soap gives off an oily film that weakens the surface tension of the water. This causes the wood pieces to move away from the soap.

Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms. Encourage all the students to participate in the activity and in the related conversation.

Example (Discourse Connectors)

Instructor: Describe what happened in this activity. Remember to use little words to join your sentences.

Alicia: The matchsticks moved toward the sugar. They did not move toward the soap.

Instructor: You can connect those two sentences by saying, "The matchsticks moved toward the sugar *and* away from the soap."

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Syntactic Forms

Activity: Scrambled Sentences

Materials: Flannel board
Flannel-backed words for constructing sentences

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use all modalities (declarative, imperative, negative, interrogative)
2. Use grammar appropriate for context
3. Order old and new information appropriately in sentences
4. Delete redundant information
5. Use referents appropriately in conversation
6. Use pronouns, articles, relative clauses, and adjectives to signal old and new information

Instructions: Present the flannel board and words in scrambled order. Ask the student to unscramble the words and make sentences. Once the words have been ordered, ask the student to arrange them in a different kind of sentence, such as interrogative or negative. Let the student use additional words as needed. Provide input for the appropriate pragmatic/syntactic forms.

Effective Language

Definition and Discussion

The culmination of successful pragmatics is the ability to use the nuances of the language to make it do what you want it to. The result is to produce highly effective communication—with all that this implies. Unsuccessful pragmatics is the individual's inability to make the language work, resulting in a frustrated and often misunderstood communicator who has difficulty interacting with others no matter how much effort is expended. All too often these individuals don't understand why their communication attempts are so unsatisfying.

Development of effective language use is realized in two distinct but related areas. First, the child must learn to use the language appropriately (Moerk 1977; Bates 1976a). Secondly, once understanding of language appropriateness is developing, the child embarks on learning to make the language perform various necessary functions. First language "is a product of the confluence of many factors." (Moerk 1977, p. 32).

LANGUAGE APPROPRIATENESS

Language, to function effectively, can be expected to be appropriate in view of the context. To make communication effective, the individual must give information that is enough but not too much; that is appropriate to the persons, place, and situation; that contains enough truth value to be acceptable to the other participants, and that is acceptably polite (Grice 1975; Searle 1965, 1975; Austin 1962).

Learning that enables each child to achieve appropriateness is a combination of experience within context and direct, immediate feedback from important individuals in the environment. The child interprets a context, interacts with it, and is then reacted to on the basis of the appropriateness displayed in each of these areas. Modifications of future behavior are made by children after they have evaluated the reactions from their latest behavior. The result of learned skill in this area is language that is sufficient, believable, polite, and appropriate for all participants.

LANGUAGE USES

The final test of useful communications is the individual's ability to perform various functions with it. Early in life, children begin learning to use language to accomplish basic tasks. As development continues, children learn to perform a variety of complex functions with the language.

Initially, babies use their vocalizations and performative gestures to carry out basic communicative functions such as labeling, requesting, protesting, etc. (Bates 1976a; Dore 1974; Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978). Children can be seen to use language to perform the following functions: Instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, and informative and incorporate them into early one- and two-word utterances (Halliday 1975; Moerk 1977). These serve as a foundation for later emerging language areas. When they are able to use multiword utterances, children will begin to do such things as ask and answer questions, give and receive directions, greet people, and interact with others on many levels (Moerk 1977; Kretschmer and Kretschmer 1978). As they gain in experience, children learn to do more and more with language. By their early school years, children are able to use language to relate to the school experience. Metalinguistically, they learn to talk about talking and to view language with the necessary detachment that serves as a base for more abstract functions. Ultimately, the individual is able to use

the highly sophisticated literary and social forms of the adult (using language to project, to defend, to coerce, or to encourage) and to enhance communication with metaphor, simile, and other figures of speech.

Select specific targets from the goals on page 106 to focus on. Then choose lesson plans from this section that stress these goals. If necessary, adapt the lesson plans to remediate a particular area for a particular level.

Guidelines for Therapy

For very young preschoolers, the area of effective language use contains both gestures and verbalization. It is more expedient to include gestures in the general format and to separate word from gesture gradually as children become more able. As children approach primary school age, the discrete elements of language become more accessible. The lesson plans for young children focus on a variety of communicative functions, providing opportunities for modeling, expansion, and reinforcement. For example, when the young child is using language to protest, the clinician should expand the language to its most acceptable form (according to age) and respond to the child's intent.

Maureen: No want milk.

Clinician: You do not want milk. All right, tell me, "I do not want milk."

Maureen: I do not want milk.

Clinician: That was good. Do you want water instead?

While the clinician will not always respond with what the child wants to hear, it must be clear to that child that the intent was understood and responded to.

In primary classes, children begin to learn how to operate in school. **This is crucial!** If, during this time, children fail to learn when to talk and when to listen, how to ask and answer questions, and how to interact appropriately in school in a variety of linguistic functions, they may have to endure endless communicative and educational failures.

Emphasis on this area must be both direct and supportive. Even more redundancy of feedback than is required at other levels may be needed. Children must be given ample practice opportunities for success and must be aware of this success and feel supported.

Clinician: Please open the jar.

Daisy: Can't.

Clinician: Are you asking me to help you?

Daisy: Yes. Can't.

Clinician: If you need help you could say, "I need some help please" or "Will you help me?" Now you make a sentence that asks for help.

Daisy: You help?

Clinician: That's better. Tell me, "Will you help me?"

Daisy: Will you help me?

Clinician: Very good! How can I help you?

The intermediate child may need help with more sophisticated linguistic maneuvers. With this age group, help children analyze what they want their language to do and explore ways of doing it. Follow discussion by appropriate modeling, expansion, and reinforcement.

Clinician: Suppose you want to tell the little girl in this picture not to feel so bad. How could you do it?

Roger: Stop that crying.

Clinician: Yes, that would be part of it. How could you let her know you understand that she needs help?

Roger: Say, "Stop that crying. You need help."

Clinician: That would be good. Maybe you could say, "Please don't cry. I will help you." How do you think that sounds? Fine, now you try it.

Roger: Don't cry and I will help you.

Clinician: Very good. Now let's talk about some of these other pictures.

In this broad area of effective language use, choose those aspects that are the most usable for a particular child. Hopefully, experience in this area will help children expand their pragmatic strengths into the sophisticated realm of adult language usage.

Behavioral Characteristics for Effective Language

The student

1. Gives sufficient information
2. Gives and takes directions
3. Uses language to predict
4. Uses language to give cause-and-effect information
5. Uses language to make choices
6. Uses language to describe
7. Expresses desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
8. Provides sufficient politeness
9. Provides sufficient truth value
10. Asks for information
11. Asks for help
12. Offers help
13. Explains a problem
14. Tells a story
15. Gives names or labels to people or things
16. Uses language to pretend
17. Suggests a course of action
18. Verbally disagrees or argues
19. Uses language to greet people
20. Opens and closes a phone conversation

Behavioral Characteristics for Higher Levels of Effective Language

The student

1. Uses language to joke
2. Uses language to suppose
3. Uses language to console
4. Uses language to deceive
5. Uses metalinguistics (talk about talking)
6. Uses the school register
7. Uses pragmatics in reading
8. Uses appropriate literary forms

The above list of language usages represents a higher level of language use. While most children will generalize to this level from the earlier levels, a few may require specific help with these targets. Such children are likely to be older and more able to benefit from direct instruction. Targets 1-5 should be explained and their appropriate uses carefully delineated. Role-play of specific situations can be useful. Children can then be assisted in creating appropriate situations for implementing the targets, with instructor feedback remaining the most important element.

Targets 6-8 are related to the pragmatics of the school context, a broad and extremely important area that describes the way each student relates to both context and content of the school. These targets address the way children use school language. To succeed in reading, the child must have built basic expectations of print, must develop strategies for reading, must maintain a respect for this medium of learning, and must identify herself or himself as a reader. As students learn language arts they can progress to use a variety of literary forms. Training will be the shared responsibility of all who interrelate with the schooling of each child. Specific areas of emphasis can be chosen and worked on both directly and indirectly. As always, feedback from teachers and clinicians is essential and the child's feeling of success will build continued success. Each child's appropriate responses to all that we know as school will make the difference between school success and school failure.

Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Effective Language

Preschool
- The Nighttime Bear
- A Tea Party
- Body Tracing
- Science Experiment—Making Rain
- Rainbow Sharing

Primary (K-3)
- Sink or Float
- Hidden Apple
- Describe Smells
- Science Experiment—Coloring Celery
- Bird Feeders

Intermediate (4-6)
- Playing Cards
- Science Experiment—Magnets
- Science Experiment—Taste Areas of the Tongue
- Neighborhood Maps
- Listen and Draw

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Effective Language

Activity: The Nighttime Bear

Materials: A bear puppet (or other animal puppet) wearing dark glasses or a visor

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Use language to describe
3. Ask for information
4. Ask for help
5. Offer help
6. Give names or labels to people or things
7. Use language to pretend

Instructions: One student uses the puppet, pretending to be the nighttime bear. Explain that this special bear can see only at night and not during the daytime. The bear would like to know what the speech room looks like, what is going on outside the window on the playground, how to get to the nurse's office, etc. The students must use language to help the bear see the same things they can see.

Vary this activity by explaining that the nighttime bear is lost and needs help finding its way. The bear asks for help and information and takes directions from the student.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Effective Language

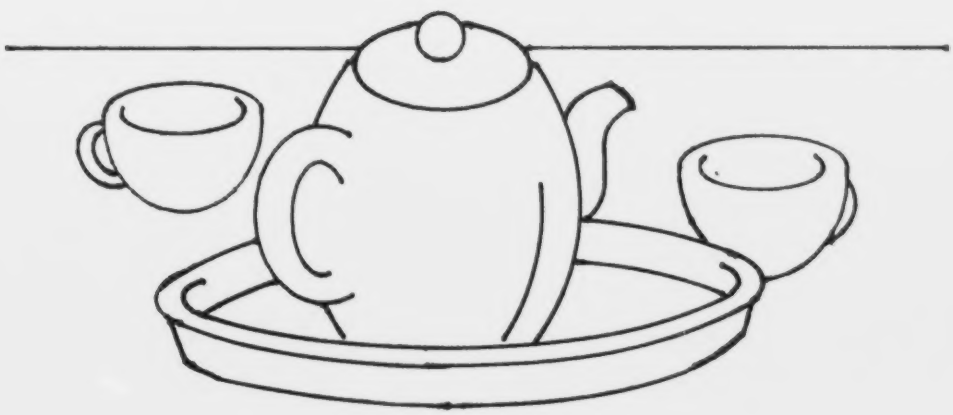
Activity: A Tea Party

Materials: Teacups, saucers, spoons, plates, teapot, napkins, cookies, juice

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give and take directions
2. Use language to make choices
3. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
4. Provide sufficient politeness
5. Ask for help
6. Offer help
7. Give names or labels to people or things
8. Suggest a course of action
9. Use language to greet people

Instructions: Greet the students individually as they arrive for the tea party and encourage each one to return the greeting. Assign each student a task such as setting the table, pouring juice, putting cookies on a plate. Encourage the students to label the materials, to discuss what they are doing with them, and to use courtesy in asking for and passing the tea-party items.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Effective Language

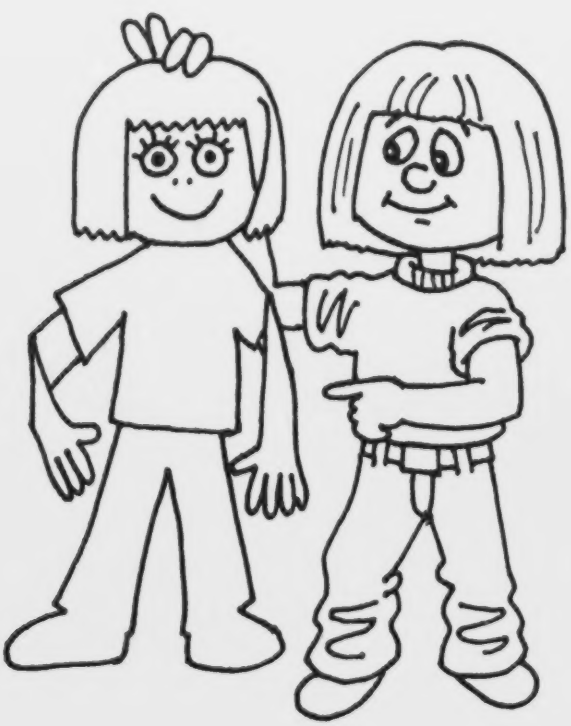
Activity: Body Tracing

Materials: Roll of wide paper, pencil, crayons, scissors

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take direction
3. Use language to make choices
4. Use language to describe
5. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
6. Ask for help
7. Give names or labels to people or things

Instructions: Ask the students to name the materials for this activity. The students then take turns lying on a piece of paper to have their bodies traced. Give them scissors to cut out their shapes and crayons to draw their faces and color their clothes. They must use language to choose the crayons and to describe their progress in the activity. Encourage the students to ask for assistance if needed.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Effective Language

Activity: Science Experiment—Making Rain (Vivian 1963)

Materials: Teakettle, hot plate or stove, soup ladle, ice water, bowl

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Use language to describe
3. Ask for information
4. Offer help
5. Give names or labels to people

Instructions: **Caution: Working with a burner and steam may be dangerous. The instructor performs all steps in this procedure.**

Ask the students to name each material in this activity. Fill the teakettle with water and place it on the burner. Let the water come to a boil. Ask the students to describe what is happening. Then place the ladle in the bowl of ice water. When the water on the burner boils, take the ladle out of the ice water and dry it. Hold it by the handle over the teakettle spout so the metal bowl of the ladle comes in contact with the vapor escaping from the spout. Drops of water will fall (rain). During the experiment, encourage the students to ask for information, to offer help, and to describe the events.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Effective Language

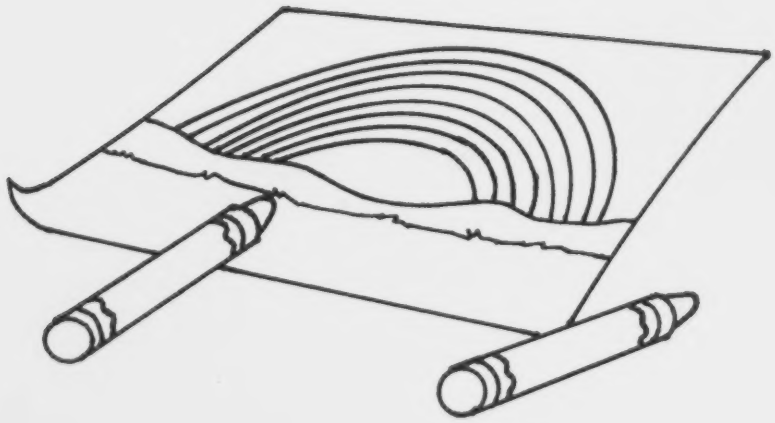
Activity: Rainbow Sharing

Materials: Paper, crayons

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take direction
3. Use language to make choices
4. Use language to describe
5. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
6. Give names or labels to people or things

Instructions: To prepare rainbows, use crayons to draw lines indicating the colored layers of rainbows on single pieces of paper. Give each student a rainbow outline. Ask each student to select a crayon to match one of the lines in the rainbow. The students fill in that space with the matching crayon and take turns asking each other for other colors to match their rainbow layers. After the rainbows are completed, the students take turns describing them to the other students.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Effective Language

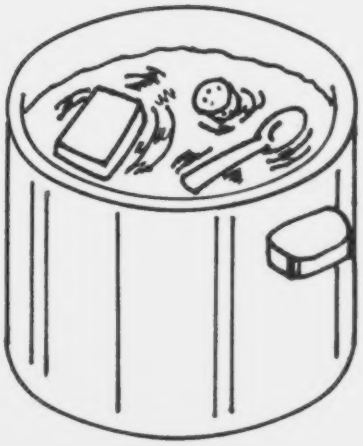
Activity: Science Experiment—Sink or Float

Materials:
Large pan of water
Various objects that float (corks, floating soap, small plastic containers, etc.)
Objects that sink (penny, spoon, non-floating soap, ring, etc.)

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to predict
4. Give cause-and-effect information
5. Use language to make choices
6. Use language to describe
7. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
8. Provide sufficient truth value
9. Verbally disagree or argue

Instructions: Show all the objects to the students. Can they predict which objects will sink and which ones will float? Then the students take turns selecting an object and placing it in the water. Discuss why some objects sink and others float.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Effective Language

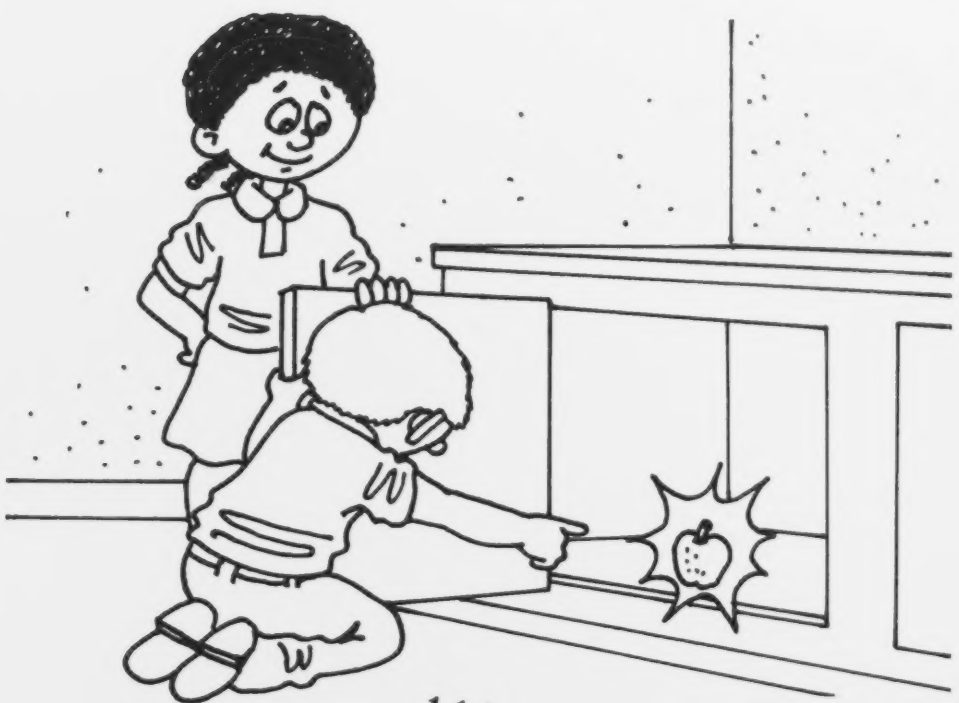
Activity: Hidden Apple

Materials: Apple

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to make choices
4. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
5. Use language to describe
6. Provide sufficient truth value
7. Ask for information
8. Give names or labels to people or things
9. Suggest a course of action

Instructions: Ask one student to be the leader and to hide the apple while the other students are out of the room. When the students return, the leader gives clues to help them find the apple. Encourage the students to make choices and to ask the leader for additional information. If the information is inaccurate or insufficient, prompt the leader to be more accurate or specific.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Effective Language

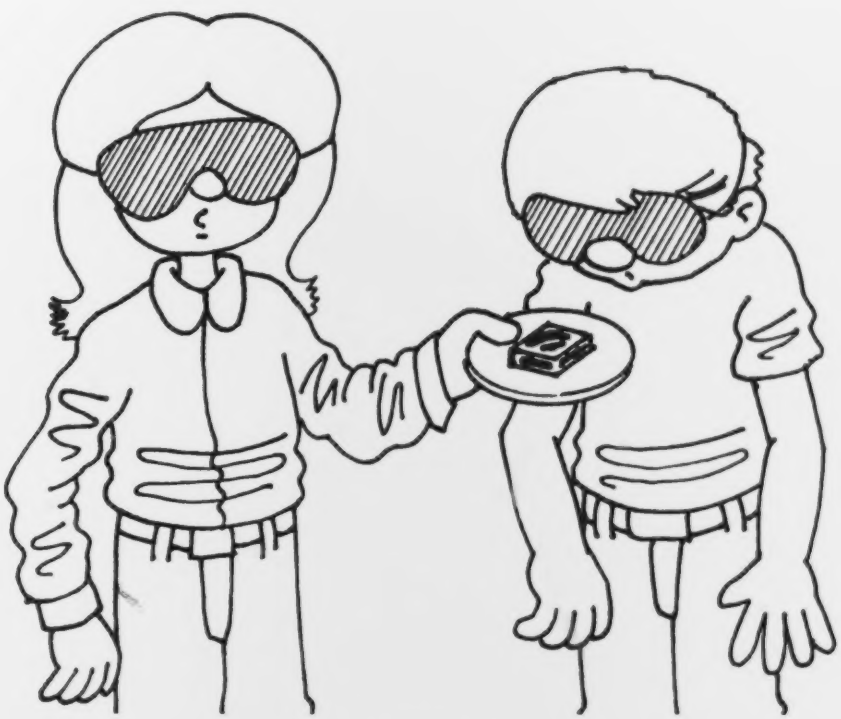
Activity: Describe Smells

Materials: Bottle of perfume, chocolate square, cut orange, cut banana, peppermint candy or flavoring, peanut butter, cut onion
Blindfolds

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Use language to predict
3. Use language to describe
4. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
5. Ask for information

Instructions: Blindfold each student. Ask the students to smell and pass one item. After each one has had a turn with the first item, ask them to describe the smell and name the item. If they need more information, they must ask pertinent questions. Continue this procedure until all items have been identified.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Effective Language

Activity: Science Experiment—Coloring Celery

Materials: Glasses with water, food coloring, celery pieces

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to predict
4. Give cause-and-effect information
5. Use language to describe
6. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
7. Use language to make choices

Instructions: Give each student a glass of water and a long piece of celery. Let each one choose a different food coloring to color the water. Can the students predict what will happen to the celery when it's placed in the water? After the experiment, discuss why the celery changed color.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Effective Language

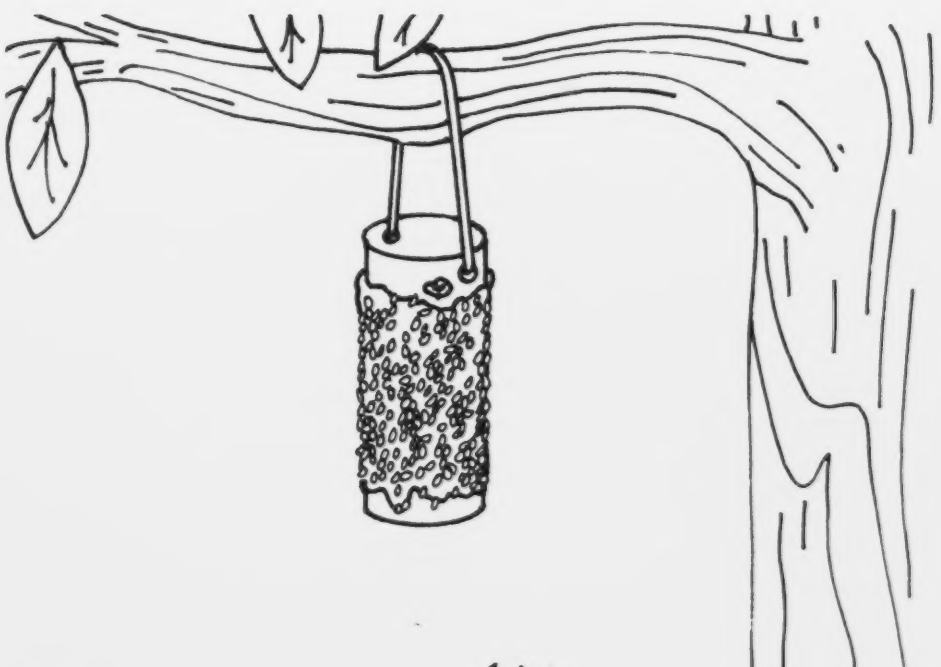
Activity: Bird Feeders

Materials: Newspaper, peanut butter, table knife, empty toilet-paper rolls, birdseed, string, scissors

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to make choices
4. Use language to describe
5. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
6. Suggest a course of action

Instructions: Show the students the materials and ask them to describe how these materials can be used to make bird feeders. The student who makes the most practical suggestions may help the other students assemble their bird feeders. Arrange newspapers on the work surface. Make a hole on each side of the cardboard roll near one end. Pass the string through the holes and tie the ends. Spread peanut butter on the cardboard then roll it in birdseed. Hang the bird feeders outside where the birds will find them. Discuss what each student did to make the bird feeder. Use the birds coming to the bird feeder as a frequent topic of conversation.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Effective Language

Activity: Playing Cards

Materials: Deck of cards or children's game cards

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Give cause-and-effect information
4. Use language to describe
5. Provide sufficient truth value
6. Ask for information
7. Ask for help
8. Explain a problem
9. Give names or labels to people or things
10. Suggest a course of action

Instructions: Present the students with an unfamiliar card game. If a student knows the game, have that student explain how the game is played to the other students. Prompt the other students to ask questions if they don't understand the directions. The students play the game, asking questions and clarifying directions whenever necessary.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Effective Language

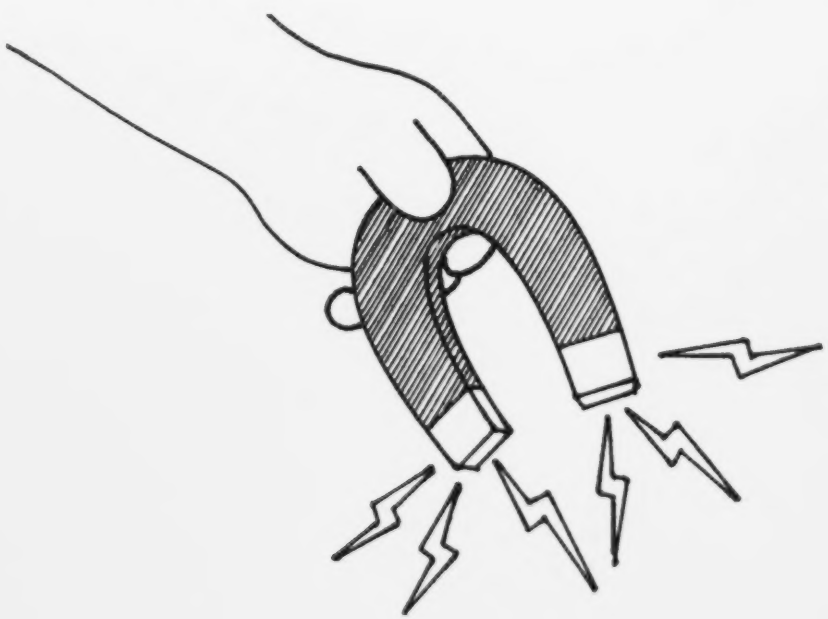
Activity: Science Experiment—Magnets

Materials: Magnets
Objects that a magnet attracts—paper clips, tacks, pins, safety pins, needle, key, metal button
Objects that a magnet will not attract—paper, spoon, pencil, cotton, plastic button

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Use language to predict
3. Give cause-and-effect information
4. Use language to describe
5. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
6. Provide sufficient truth value
7. Ask for information
8. Explain a problem
9. Give names or labels to people or things

Instructions: Show the students the magnets and other objects. Ask them to take turns predicting which objects will adhere to the magnets and why (cause-and-effect information). Then the students place the magnet on each object, describing what they are doing and what the results are.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Effective Language

Activity: Science Experiment—Taste Areas of the Tongue (Hanauer 1968)

Materials:
Sugar
Salt
0.1% quinine or epsom salt solution
4 glasses
A small amount of vinegar
Water
Paper towels
A box of toothpicks or cotton swabs

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to predict
4. Give cause-and-effect information
5. Use language to make choices
6. Use language to describe

Instructions: Prepare one of the following mixtures in each of four glasses: A 5% solution of sugar (sweet), a salt solution (salty), a 0.1% quinine or epsom salt solution (bitter), and a vinegar solution (sour). Have the students wipe their tongues with paper towels. Dip a toothpick or swab in the sugar solution. Touch it to the tip, middle, edge, and back of the dry tongue. Discard the toothpick or swab. Note on a piece of paper when the student's tongue had the strongest sensation of sweetness. The students rinse their mouths with cold tap water and again dry their tongues with paper towels. Test the other solutions following the same procedure. Be sure to use a clean toothpick or swab for each solution and have the students rinse their mouths and dry their tongues between solutions.

During the activity, encourage the students to make choices about the order of presentation of the solutions and to predict which area of the tongue will have the strongest sensation. Ask them to describe the taste of each solution.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Effective Language

Activity: Neighborhood Maps

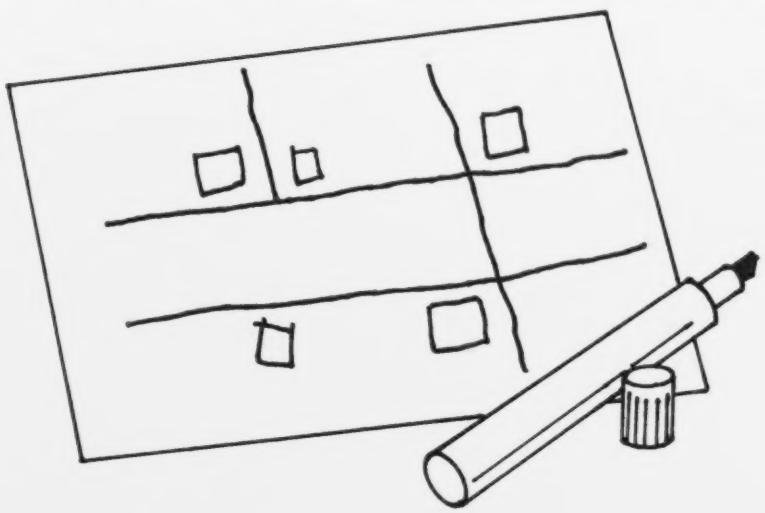
Materials: Large pieces of construction paper, markers

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Give cause-and-effect information
4. Use language to make choices
5. Use language to describe
6. Express desires, needs, feelings, or ideas
7. Provide sufficient truth value
8. Verbally disagree or argue

Instructions: Give each student paper and markers. Ask them to draw their neighborhoods. They can indicate streets, landmarks, houses of neighbors and friends, etc. Then ask the students to describe in as much detail as possible what they have drawn. Correct any inaccurate labels and discuss what would happen if a student made a wrong turn.

To vary this activity, add an erroneous landmark to the student's map and encourage the student to disagree politely.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Effective Language

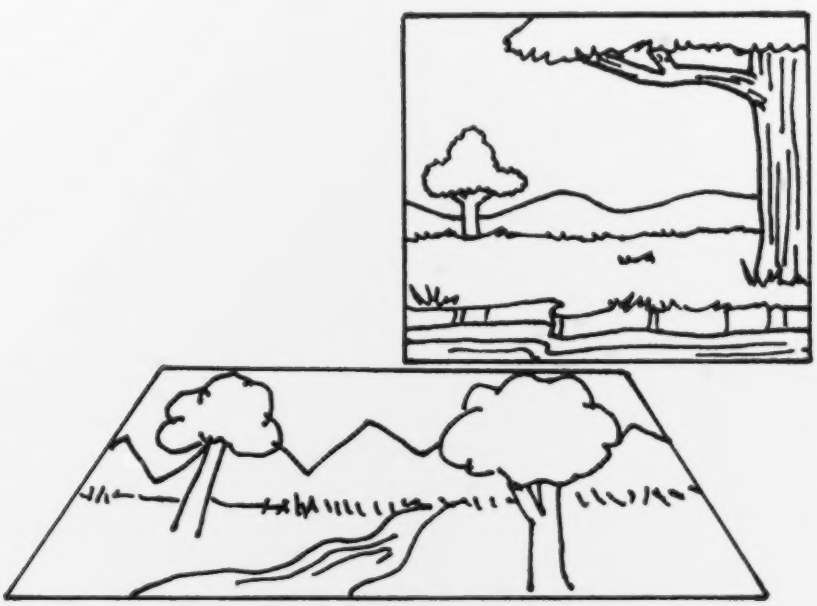
Activity: Listen and Draw

Materials: Picture of a scene, paper, crayons

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Give sufficient information
2. Give and take directions
3. Use language to predict
4. Use language to describe
5. Tell a story

Instructions: Give one student a picture of a scene to describe to the other students, who try to duplicate the scene. The student who is describing must use descriptive language, give directions, and provide sufficient information so that in the end all pictures will be similar. Intercede if necessary to clarify or to encourage additional information. When the drawings are complete, ask the students to tell stories about personal experiences that are brought to mind by their pictures.



Nonverbal Communication

Definition and Discussion

Speech-language clinicians are primarily interested in verbal communication and spend most of their time mediating it. However, the area of nonverbal communication is important in presenting cohesive, noncontradictory messages. Clinicians who work primarily with developmentally delayed populations may find that they devote the majority of their efforts to nonverbal communications.

The entire subject of pragmatics, first suggested under the name of *Semiotics* by Charles Peirce (Peirce 1932; Bates 1976a) encompassed a variety of nonverbal communications. This understanding of pragmatics combines with our current emphasis on linguistic pragmatics to describe an area that addresses all the nonlinguistic aspects of communication. The area is often divided into three parts: *Kinesics, proxemics,* and *linguistic pragmatics.*

KINESICS

Birdwhistell stated "that body motion is a learned form of communication, which is patterned within a culture and which can be broken down into an ordered system of isolable elements" (1970, p. xi). Like spoken language, the area of kinesics relates to a learned rule system for receiving and giving messages (Hopper and Naremore 1978). Since the messages are also usually linguistic, it becomes essential that the linguistic message and the kinesic message be in agreement. If these two systems are not operating in conjunction, the individual may be given competing or mixed messages. While these competing messages have the capability of seriously distorting communication, they can be very subtle and difficult to identify.

PROXEMICS

The study of proxemics is concerned with the way individuals use the space they claim as personal (Hopper and Naremore 1978). Messages are diminished or enhanced by the relative positions of the bodies of the speaker and listeners in any communication constellation and the space each individual uses (Wood 1976; Hall 1959). The use of proxemics appears culturally determined and message misunderstandings can occur whenever individuals from divergent cultures are interacting. Often one person feels that the other person is impinging on personal space and backs away, while the other interprets this action as rejection. Youngsters in our own culture have to learn the acceptable parameters of personal space by trial and error with adults.

LINGUISTIC PRAGMATICS

This area of emphasis is most customarily addressed by the speech-language clinician and embodies all the physical and prosodic activities that accompany language, such as eye contact, verbal turn-taking, understanding the function of conversation, and utilization of proxemics and kinesics to enhance rather than detract from the message.

Important pragmatic learning of this nature is part of the communicative foundation that results from the *joint activity* or motherese. All nonverbal aspects of pragmatics are crucial both expressively and receptively. Like more linguistic elements, they must be learned by trial and error and by direct feedback from the environment.

Guidelines for Therapy

The kinesic and proxemic expectations we have of our children will be only those defined by their culture and language family. At younger ages this can best be done by motoric manipulation and modeling of the accompanying language. If children are old enough to talk about gesture and space, they can be led in discussions of their uses or can demonstrate them on a flannel board. There should always be follow-up of practice and role-play in which the child has opportunity to note both observation and violation of the principles.

As they become mature enough to handle the concepts, children can be given experiences focused on *not* giving competing or confusing messages:

Clinician: Linda, when you tell me you are interested in my story, you also need to look at me and act like you are interested. Let's practice. How can you act when someone offers you a cookie and you accept?

Linda: Thank you. (Looks attentive.)

Clinician: Good.

The clinician and child can then move through other experiences prompted by the lesson plans in this book with feedback given at every appropriate point.

The nonlinguistic precursors and accompaniments of linguistic pragmatics that are most devastating in their absence are those that relate to attention. Training in these has direct benefits in the attention children pay, how appropriately they respond, and how they are perceived by others. Clinicians may need to monitor conversations and activities much as a traffic controller does:

Clinician: You need to look at me if you want to tell me.

Larry: (Establishes eye contact and smiles.)

Clinician: Look at me. Now tell me.

Larry: (Accomplishes task.)

Clinician: Very good. I understand better when you look right at me.

With older children, different instructions might be appropriate:

Clinician: Look at the people you are talking to. Joshua, are you looking at Diane? Good. Now ask her. . . .

Joshua: (Practices the question.)

Clinician: Now Diane, look back at Joshua and answer.

Diane: (Practices her response.)

Clinician: Good! Let's try it.

For younger children, this would be accompanied by verbal turn-taking that focuses on whose turn it is to talk:

Clinician: Wait, Mandy. It's Freddie's turn to talk now. You listen to what he says.

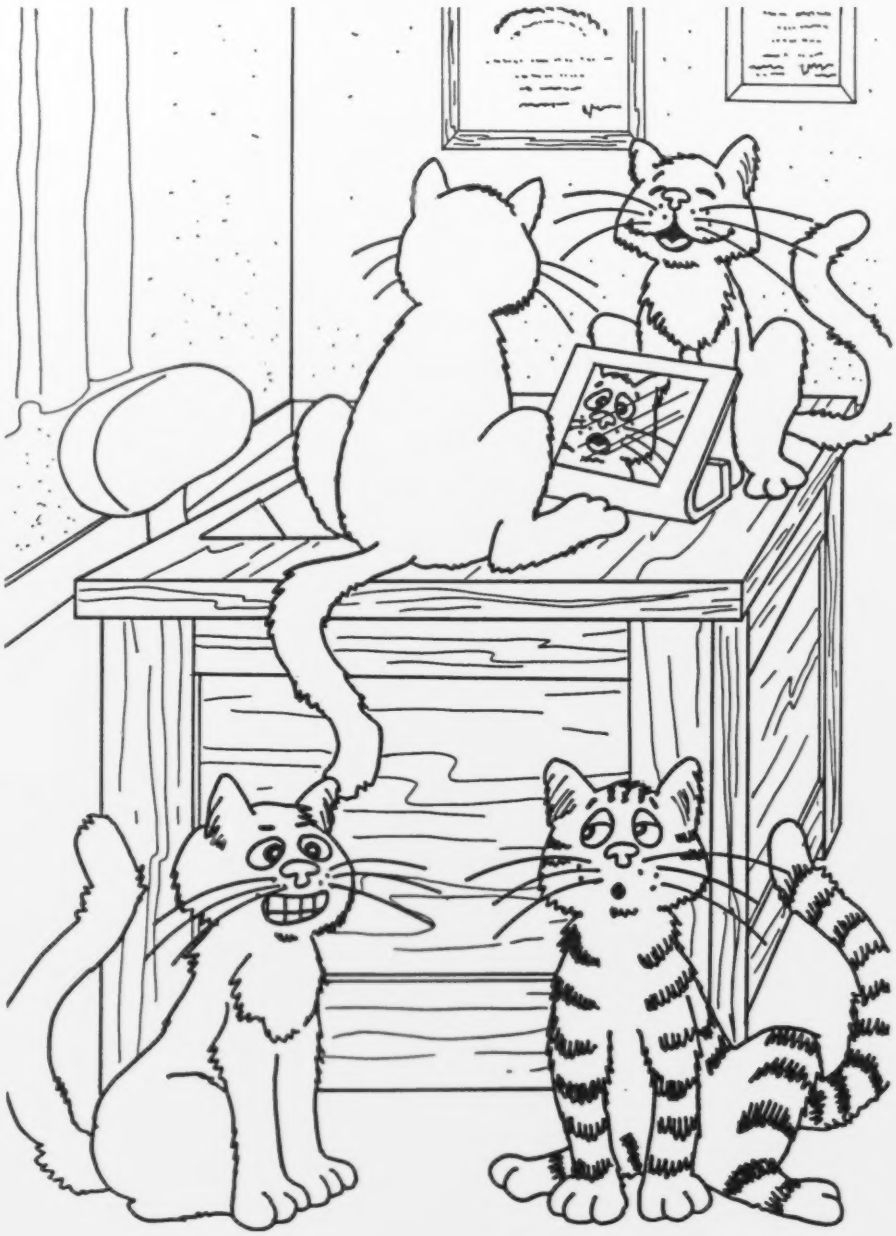
Good! Now, Mandy, you can answer.

As children become more sophisticated they can discuss turn-taking, interrupting, and relationships between verbal turn-taking and all other conversational aspects of language. The following lesson plans focus on the nonverbal elements that are necessary and that provide opportunities for nonverbal practice and reinforcement. As these nonverbals are translated to linguistic efforts, activities in other sections of this sourcebook will meet linguistic needs.

Behavioral Characteristics for Nonverbal Communications

The student

1. Uses appropriate eye contact
2. Takes turns vocally
3. Understands both verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Gives compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
5. Uses appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)
6. Understands the parameters of personal space
7. Imitates vocalizations
8. Sequences activity



Pragmatic Lesson Plans: Nonverbal Communication

Preschool
- Peek-a-Boo
- Echo Play
- Look with Me
- Watch My Mouth
- The Talking Game

Primary (K-3)
- Matching Faces and Words
- Choral Singing with Gestures
- Circles of Space
- Stop and Drop
- Turn-Taking in Play

Intermediate (4-6)
- Find the Answers in My Face
- Pantomime the Message
- No Mixed Messages
- Spacing the Pictures
- Sequence the Sandwich

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Peek-a-Boo

Materials: Puppet or noisemaker

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: This is an activity to use with one student. Take turns hiding behind your hands. Encourage the student to watch you. Maintain eye contact by using a puppet or a noisemaker. Prompt the student to vocalize whenever possible.

Vary the activity by hiding behind objects in the room, by opening and closing your eyes, and by holding an object in front of your face.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Echo Play

Materials: None

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Take turns vocally
2. Use appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)
3. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Make sounds and have the student imitate them. Imitate any original production made by the student. Encourage inflectional contrasts such as high-low, loud-soft, and voiced-unvoiced.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Look with Me

Materials: Assortment of toys such as cars, trucks, balls, balloons, etc.

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Have the student select a toy. As you and the student play with the toy, name the toy and the action associated with it to chain the words to the object and establish joint referents. Encourage the student to imitate your vocalizations.

Example

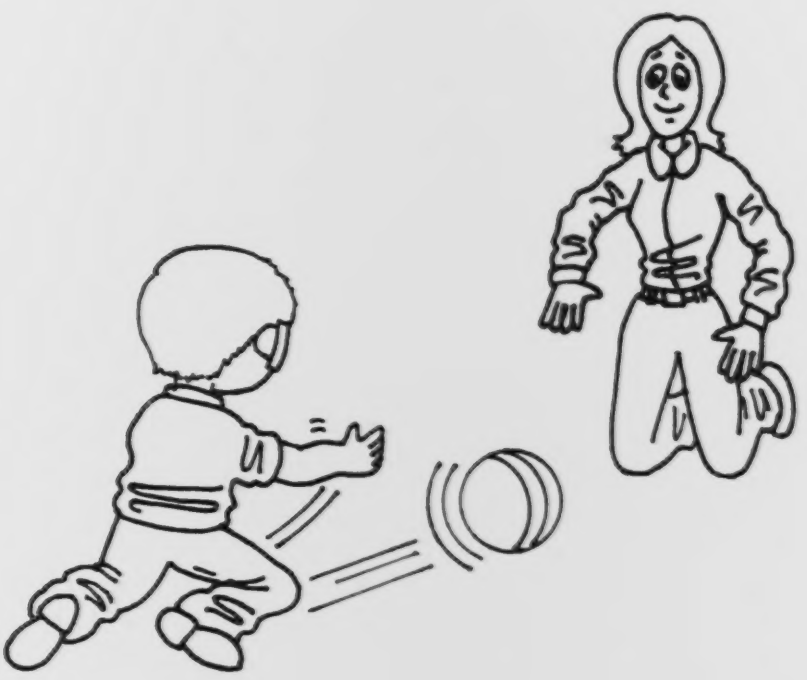
Instructor: (Holding ball) Ball. Ball.

Randy: Ball.

Instructor: That's right. (Rolling ball to Randy) Rolls. Rolls.

Randy: (Rolling ball back) Rolls.

Instructor: Very Good.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Nonverbal Communication

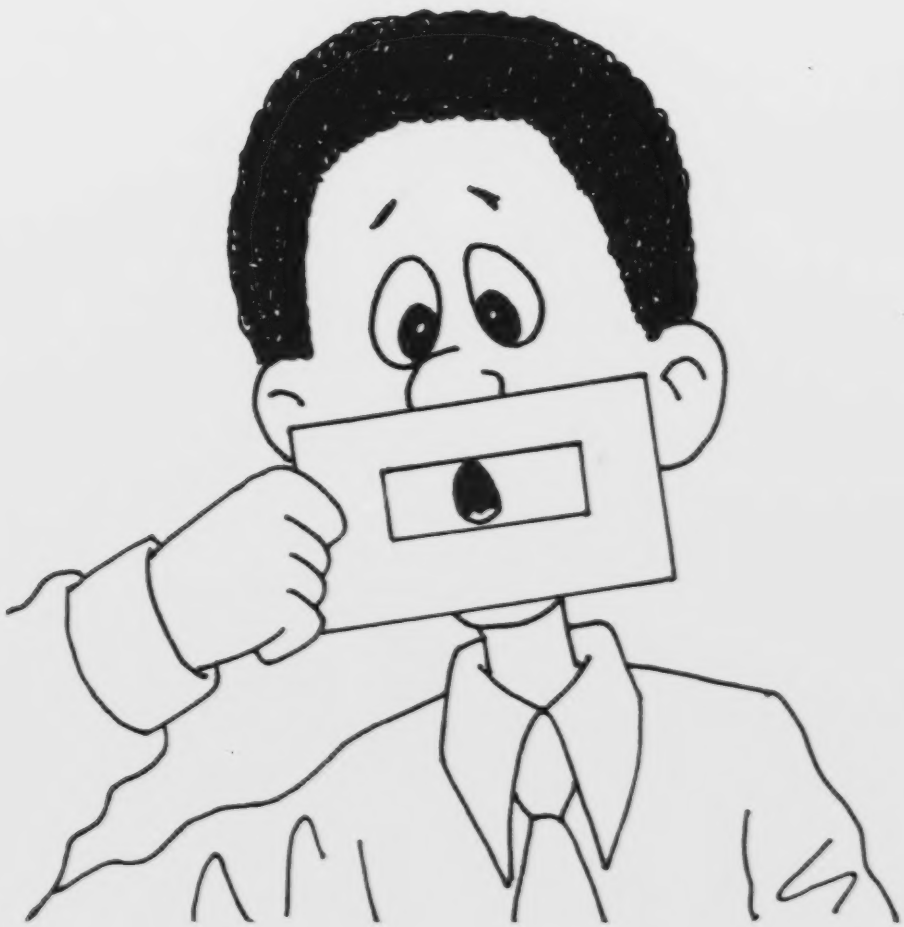
Activity: Watch My Mouth

Materials: 4" x 6" card, mirror

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Use a 4" x 6" card with the center cut out as a highlighter to hold in front of your mouth. Sit with the student in front of a mirror and produce an assortment of mouth and lip postures and vocalizations. Be sure the student can see in the same mirror to imitate you. Reinforce the student's imitations.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Preschool Nonverbal Communication

Activity: The Talking Game

Materials: Toy microphone, situation cards

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Take turns vocally
2. Use appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)
3. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Sit in a circle with the students. Show a situation card or pantomime a situation. The students pass around a microphone and take turns vocalizing to fit the situation at their levels of linguistic development.

Example

The situation card says, "Ice-cream cone."

Erica: Yummy!

George: I want one!

Kathy: My favorite is chocolate.

Stan: Mmmmmmm.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Nonverbal Communication

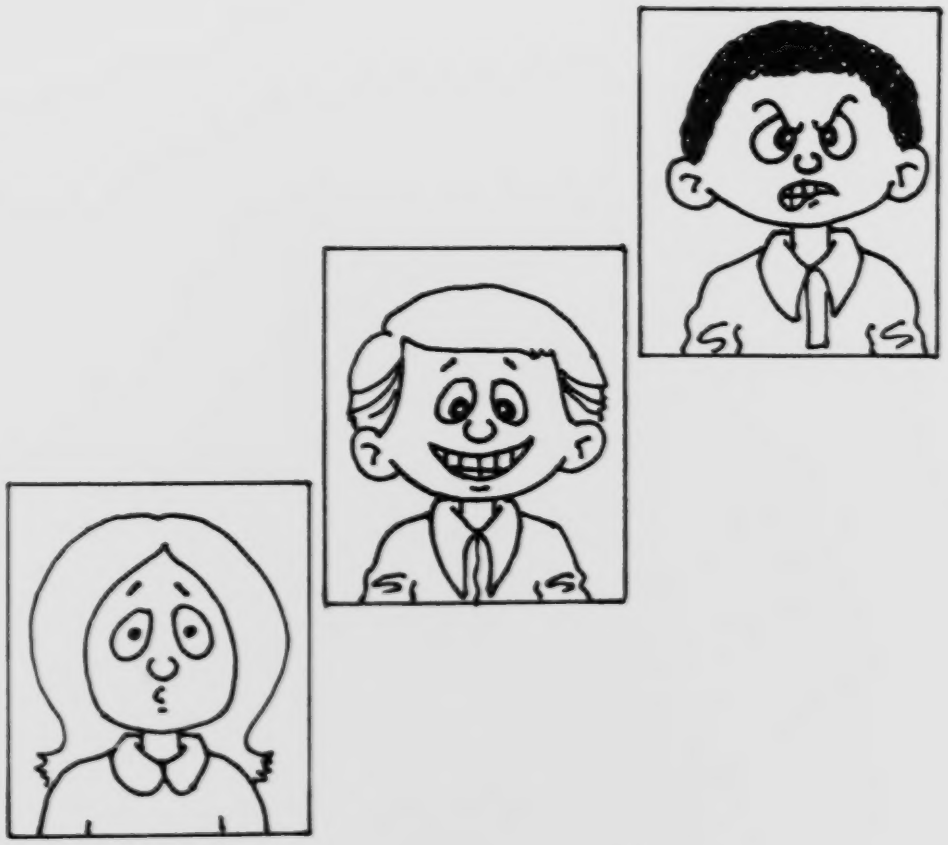
Activity: Matching Faces and Words

Materials: Pictures of children with various expressions on their faces

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
5. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Show the pictures to the students. Ask them to listen and watch as you produce a variety of utterances. The students' task is to match the faces to the utterances. Encourage them to imitate the utterances and the appropriate facial expressions.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Choral Singing with Gestures

Materials: None

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Use appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)
5. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Have the students sing two or three songs that are traditionally accompanied by hand gestures until they know the songs (Eensie-Weensie Spider, The Baby Bumble Bee, etc.). Then as one student produces the gestures, the others hum the melody without words. Ask the students to make up new but appropriate gestures to the same songs.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Circles of Space

Materials: Carpet circles in several colors

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Take turns vocally
2. Understand the parameters of personal space

Instructions: Students take turns arranging the carpet circles on the floor in positions suitable for class activities such as rhythm band, story time, snack time, etc. The student who has arranged the circles seats the other students and the instructor. If the arrangement is not reasonable for the activity, the problems are discovered, discussed by the students, and the circles are rearranged.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Nonverbal Communication

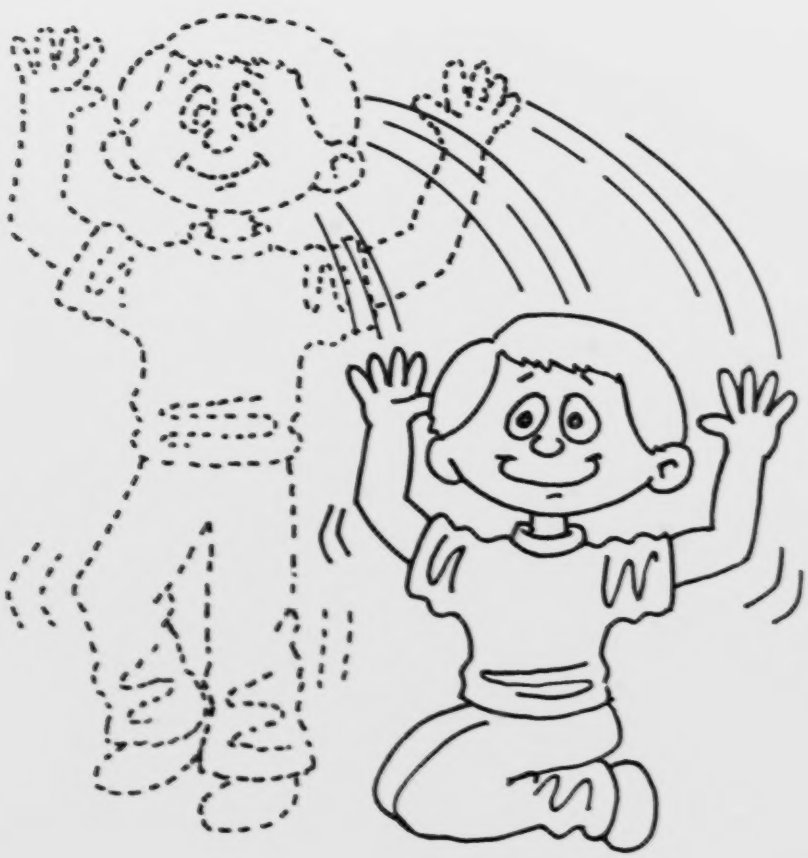
Activity: Stop and Drop

Materials: Record player or tape recorder with music for marching or dancing

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
3. Use appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)
4. Understand the parameters of personal space
5. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Ask the students to march or dance and hum along while listening carefully to the music. At irregular intervals, stop the music. The students must drop instantly to the floor as a response to this nonverbal message. Instruct them not to fall on each other but to respect other students' space.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Primary (K-3) Nonverbal Communication

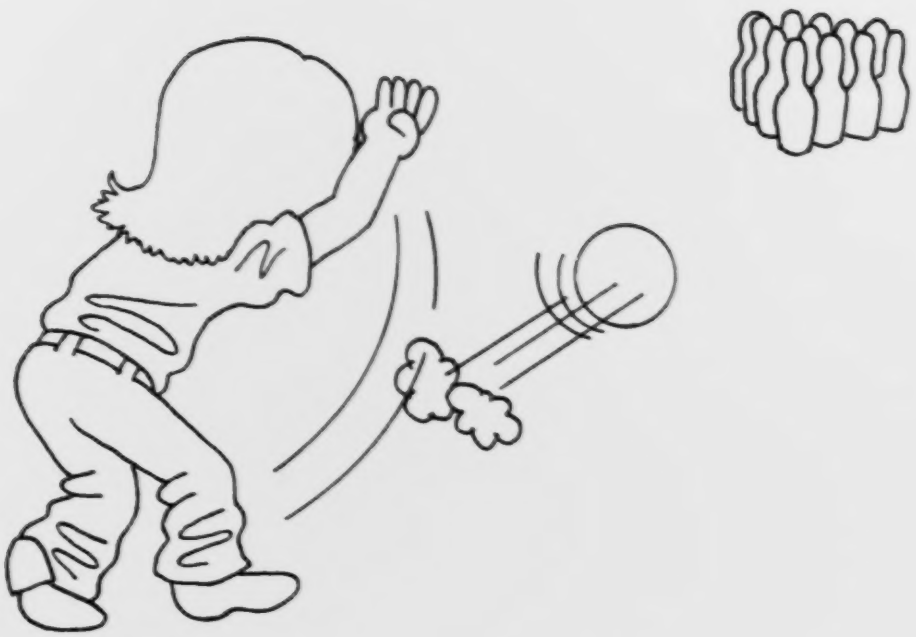
Activity: Turn-Taking in Play

Materials: Plastic bowling pins and ball

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
5. Imitate vocalizations
6. Sequence the activity

Instructions: Maintain eye contact with the students as you give directions and set up the pins. Have the students establish bowling order and take turns setting up the pins. Throughout the activity, focus discussion on who has just bowled, who is bowling now, and who will be next.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Find the Answers in My Face

Materials: Paper bag
Slips of paper with questions that produce emotional responses

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Imitate vocalizations

Instructions: Place the questions in the bag. Have the students take turns drawing questions from the bag. Read the question out loud and make two facial expressions: One to represent the correct response to the question, the other to represent an incorrect response. Ask the students to imitate the facial expression that answers the question.

Examples

Do you like ice cream?

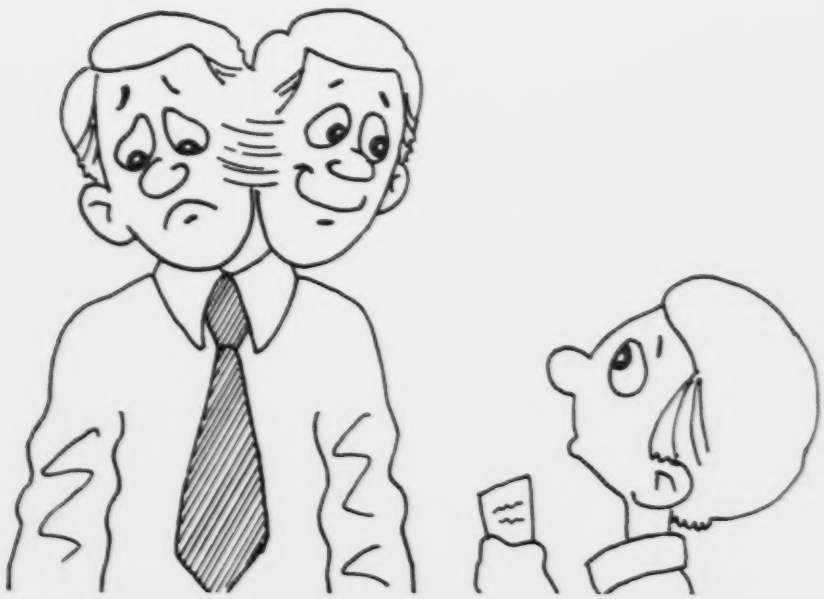
Is your bedtime five o'clock?

Do you want a puppy?

How do you feel about being alone in the dark?

How much do you like potato chips?

What does your face look like when you look at a friend?



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Pantomime the Message

Materials: Paper bag
Slips of paper with messages for pantomiming

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
3. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages

Instructions: Place the messages in the bag. Have the students take turns drawing messages from the bag. Read the message to the student, who then pantomimes the message.

Examples

You are feeling very happy today.

The room is a mess. You have to clean it.

You've eaten too much and don't feel well.

Standing in line is boring.

When the sun is bright it hurts your eyes.

PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: No Mixed Messages

Materials: None

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Use appropriate eye contact
2. Take turns vocally
3. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
5. Use appropriate prosody (suprasegmentals)

Instructions: Produce a message and a facial expression simultaneously. The student indicates whether the message and expression agree.

Examples

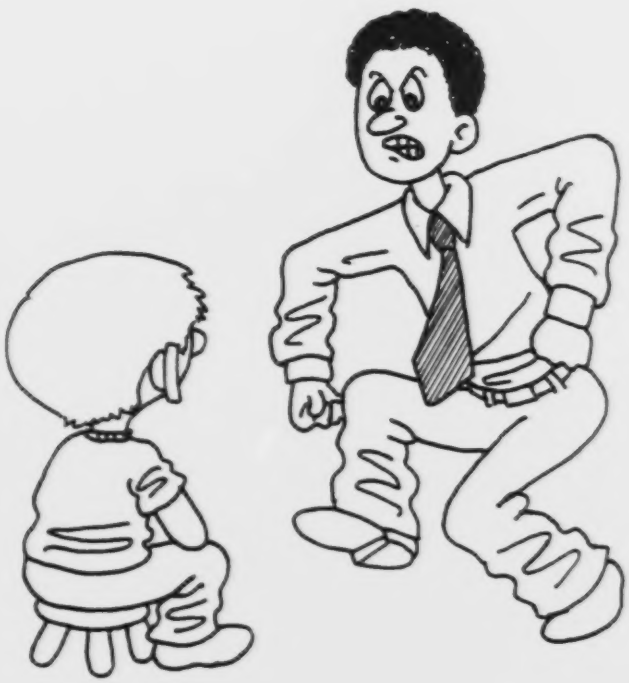
I'm happy.

I like you.

Someone doesn't like me.

I'm asking you a question.

You did a bad thing.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Nonverbal Communication

Activity: Spacing the Pictures

Materials: Flannel board
Flannel-backed pictures of family, community members, and props

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Take turns vocally
2. Understand both verbal and nonverbal messages
3. Understand the parameters of personal space

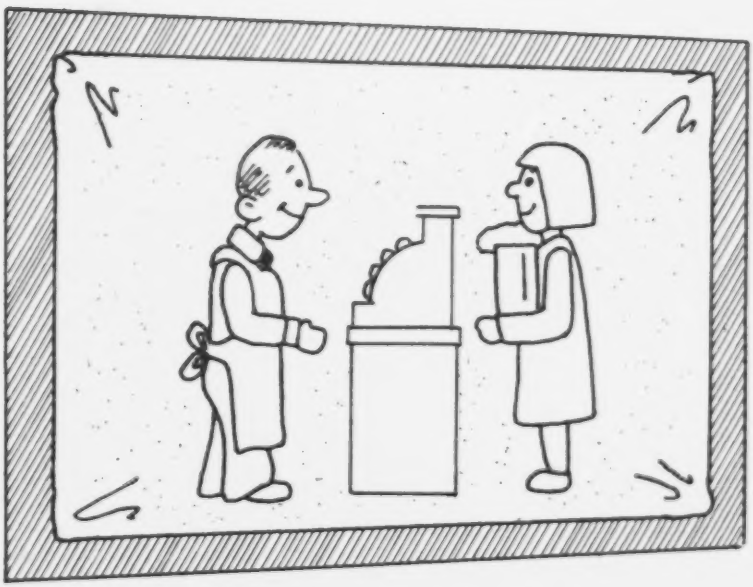
Instructions: Describe a specific situation. Gestures may accompany your description. Ask the students to take turns choosing the people who would be involved in the situation and displaying them in their appropriately related positions on the flannel board.

Example

Instructor: The customer is buying groceries and paying the clerk.

Chris: (Places the cash register, the customer, and the clerk in that order on the flannel board.)

Instructor: You should put the clerk behind the cash register with the customer standing at the counter.



PRAGMATIC LESSON PLAN: Intermediate (4-6) Nonverbal Communication

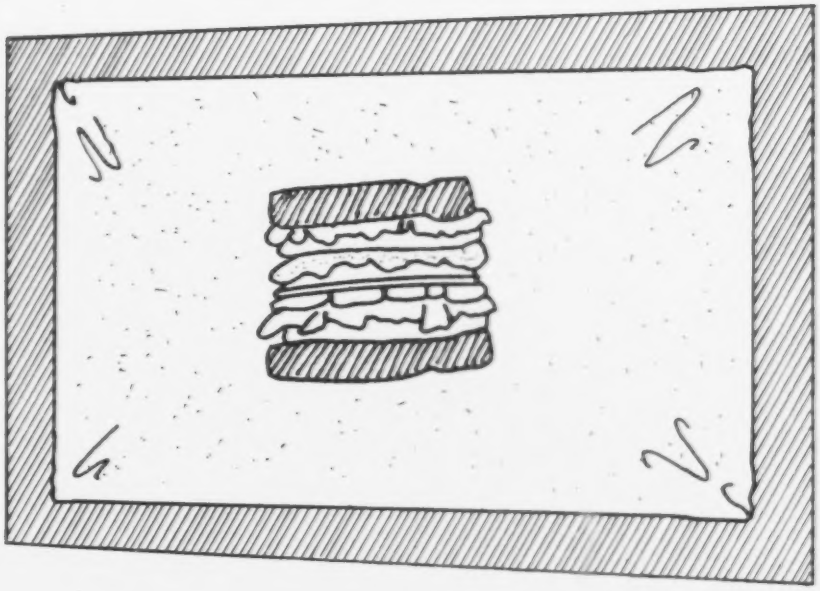
Activity: Sequence the Sandwich

Materials: Flannel board
Flannel cut-outs of bread, meat, lettuce, pickles, cheese, and mustard

Pragmatic Goals: The student will

1. Take turns vocally
2. Give compatible verbal and nonverbal messages
3. Sequence activity

Instructions: Ask the students to arrange the sandwich parts in sequence on the flannel board. Have them describe what they are doing. Reinforce vocalizations.



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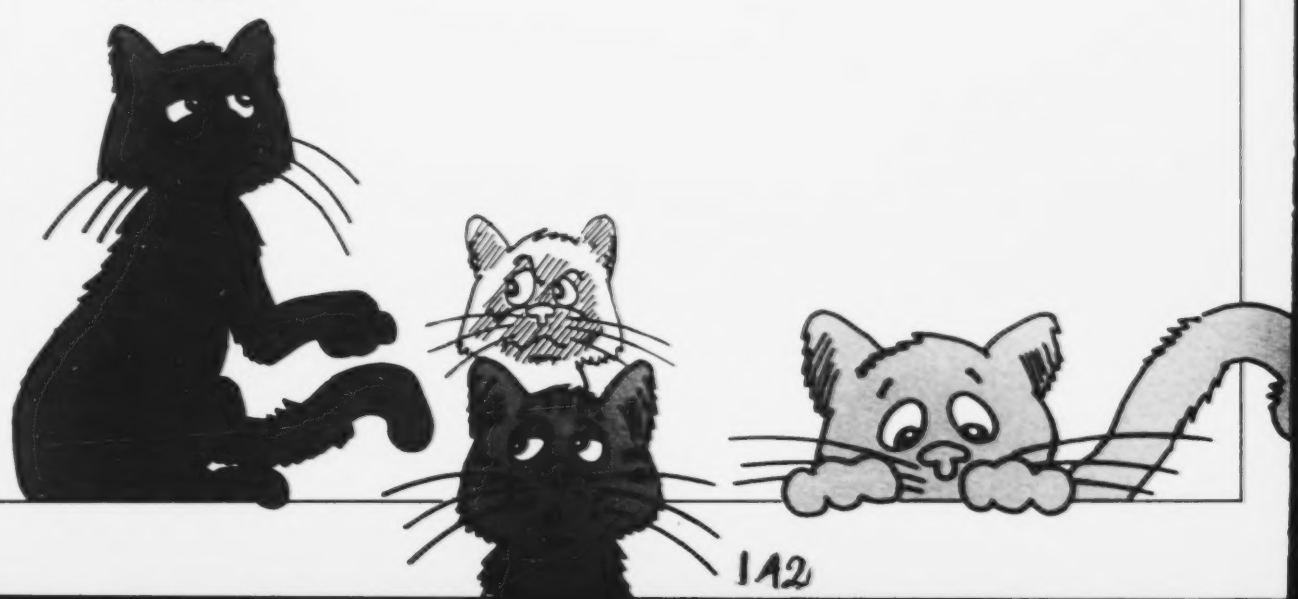
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